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PUNCH OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI - WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9 1953

6d

PUNCH



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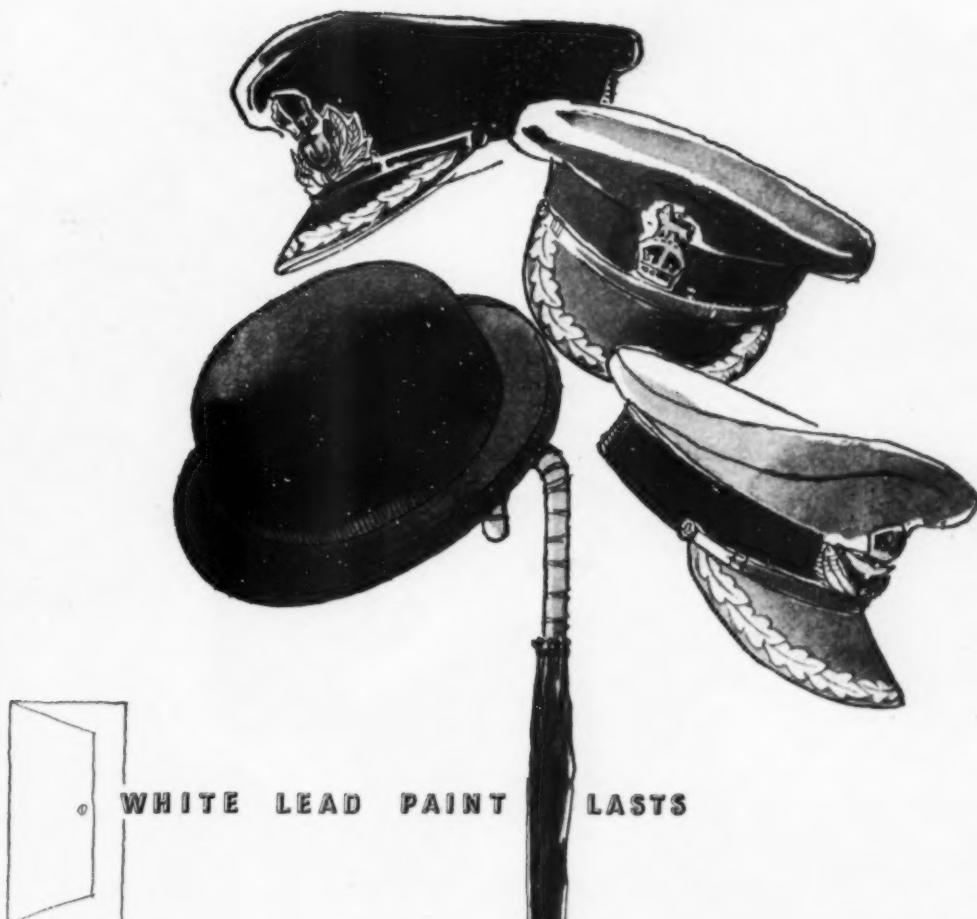
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* Item 93 on page 40 of a Report by the
Heads of the Works Directorates of
the Ministry of Works, Admiralty, Air Ministry
and War Office on 'Economy of
Building Materials' published by H.M.S.O.,
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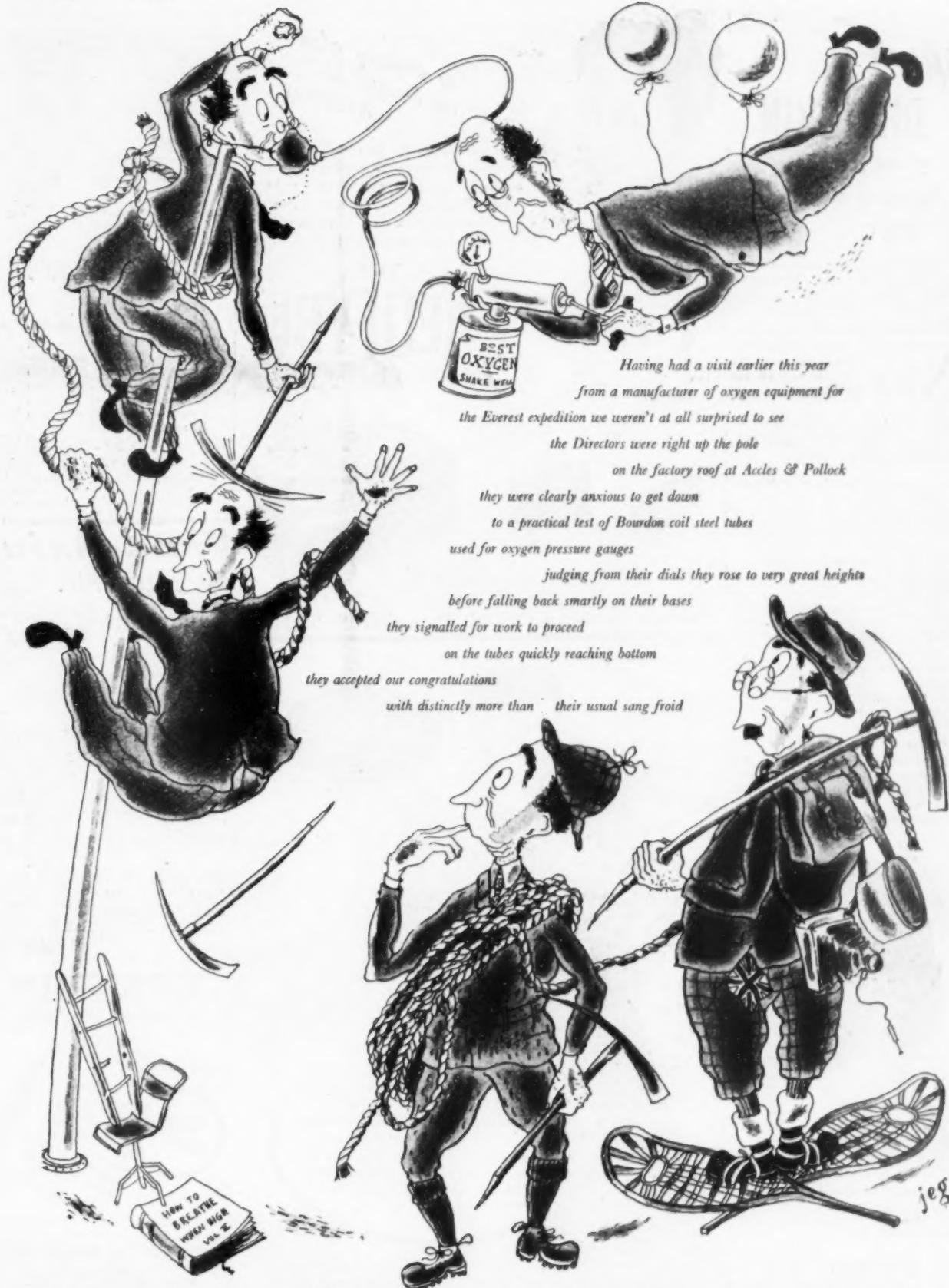
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Offset this loss by using Pond's Dry Skin Cream. Three features make this Cream extra effective:

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Pond's Dry Skin Cream costs 2/6 and 4/11 a jar.

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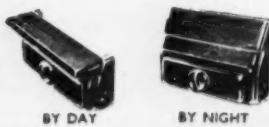


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Dry Skin?
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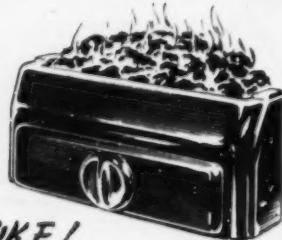
Punch, September 9 1953



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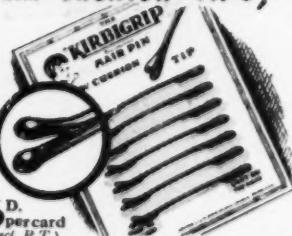


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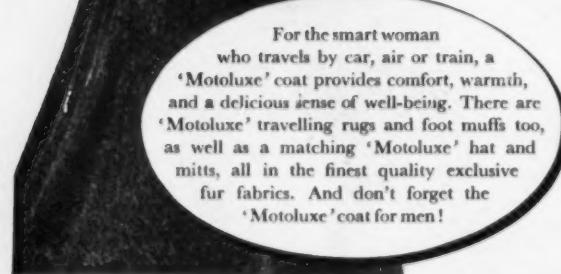
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who travels by car, air or train, a ‘Motoluxe’ coat provides comfort, warmth, and a delicious sense of well-being. There are ‘Motoluxe’ travelling rugs and foot muffs too, as well as a matching ‘Motoluxe’ hat and mitts, all in the finest quality exclusive fur fabrics. And don't forget the ‘Motoluxe’ coat for men!

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Feel it carefully, lovingly.

It has the patina of silver and the bloom of a nectarine. It is not painted, sprayed or touched-up; it is waxed to its own colour, clear and true. It has a gentle resilience, a give-and-take which makes it as comfortable new as old; its natural sheen and lustre are as beautiful old as new. It has been made, as it deserves, into the simplest and best of shoes . . .

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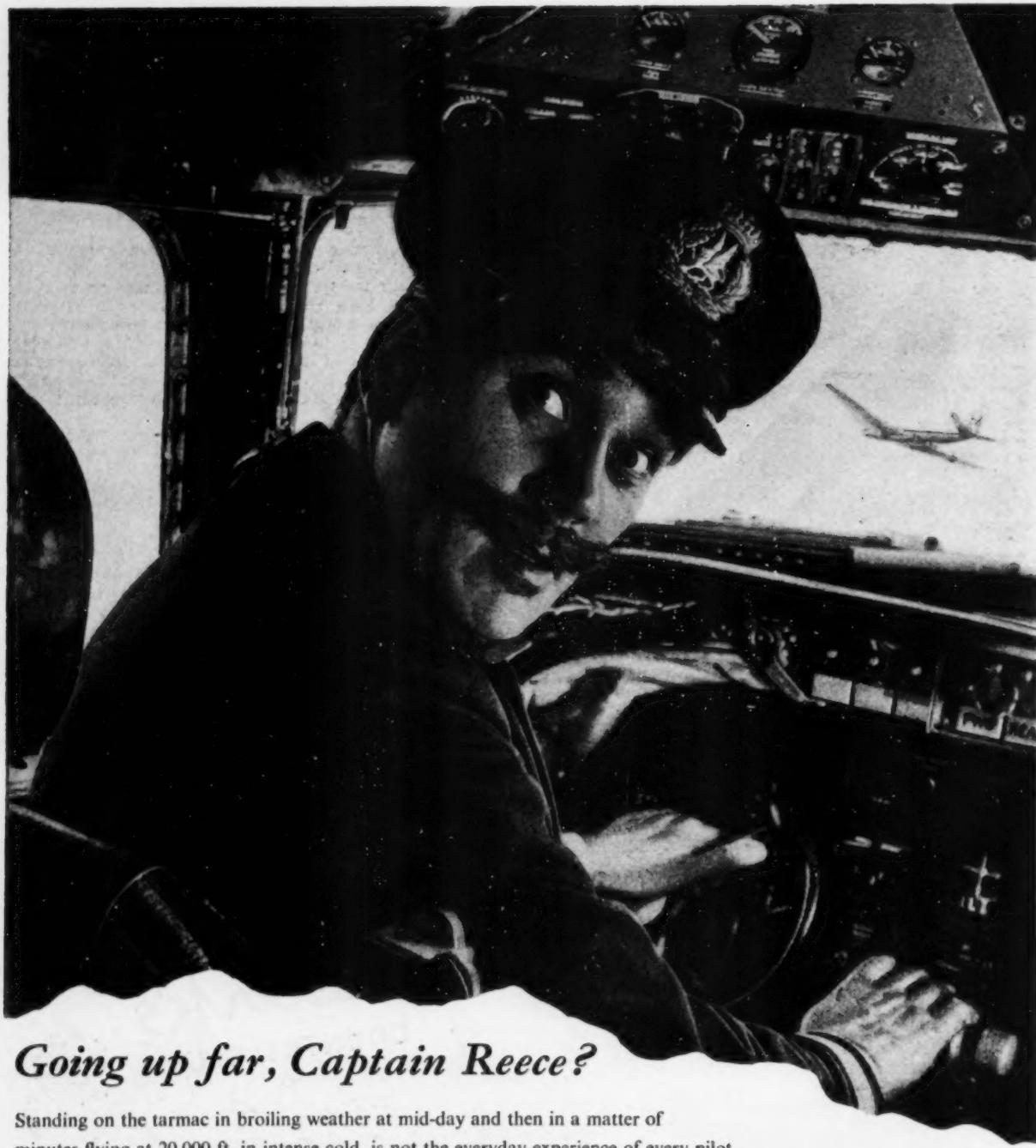
OSBORNE Walnut brown calf; also falcon grey or black suede.

CHILTERN Teak, hawthorn red or flagship blue calf.

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Going up far, Captain Reece?

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But it is becoming commonplace with the newest types of planes. Rapid changes from one extreme temperature to another call for new materials like silicones if the aircraft is to function perfectly. Silicones are a completely new range of heat and cold resisting fluids, greases, resins and rubbers, marketed by Midland Silicones Ltd., an associated company of Albright & Wilson. They are helping to make it possible for modern aircraft like the De Havilland Comet and the English Electric Canberra to fly higher, faster and farther than ever before.



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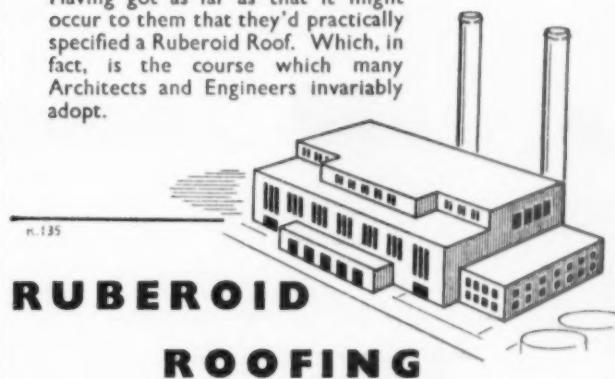
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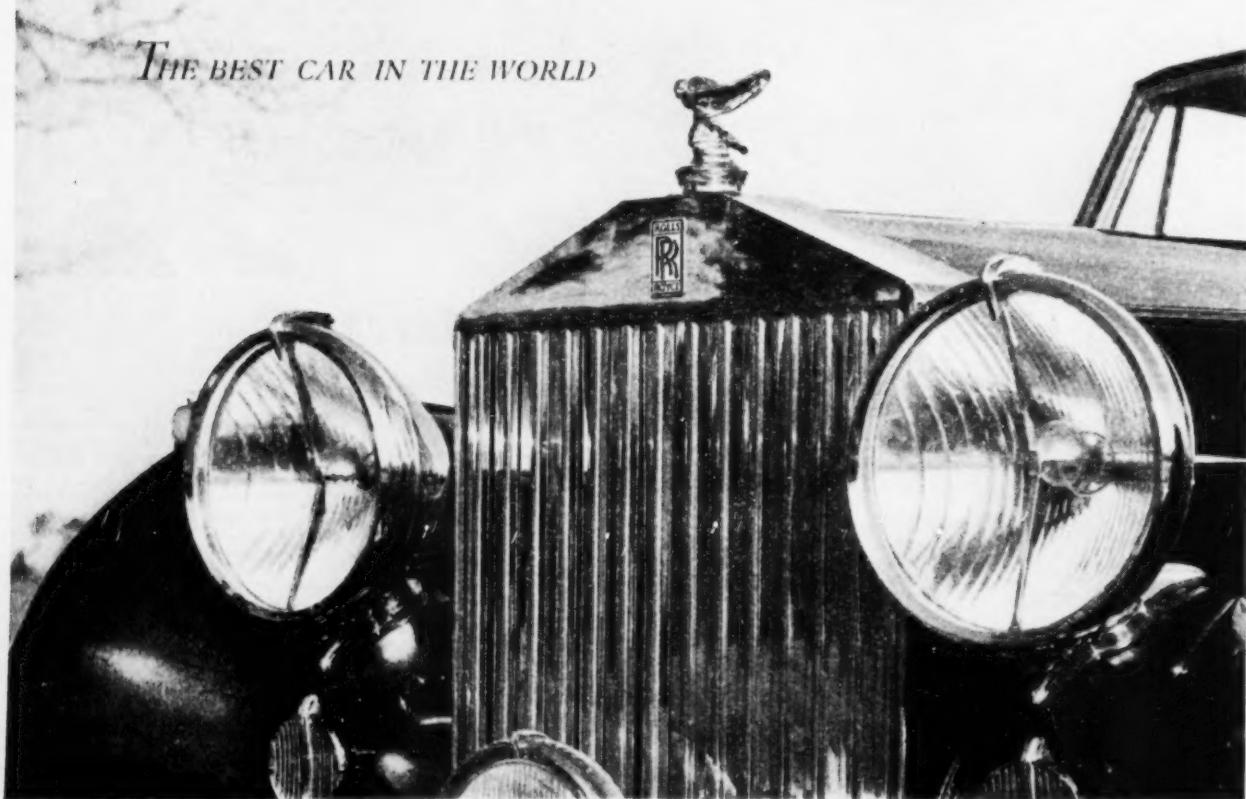


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Over 27,000 passengers have flown by B.O.A.C. *Comet* jetliner since the world's first service was inaugurated 2nd May last year. Ask any one of them about this miracle of effortless flight . . . about the comfort and quiet as you cruise eight miles a minute . . . the lack of vibration and absence of travel fatigue. Then you will understand why B.O.A.C. is miles ahead in air travel. And why your next flight to South Africa, the Middle East, the Far East or Japan must be by B.O.A.C. *Comet* jetliner. No other airline flies so far so fast . . .

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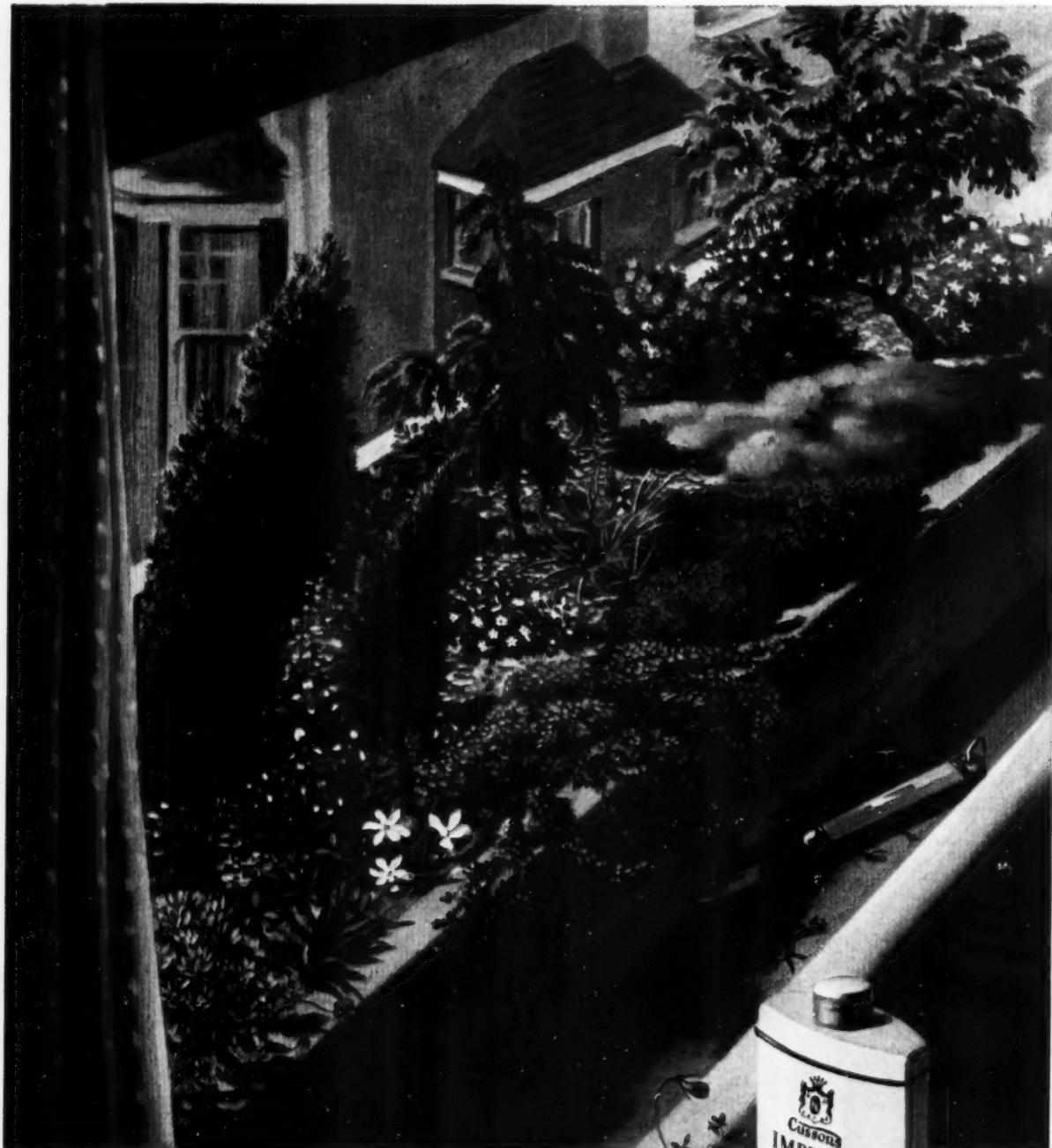


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THE MOST BLESSED MOMENTS of our lives are moments of deliverance; deliverance from anxiety, from fear, from longing; deliverance perhaps from nothing more than some irksome task. Most blessed of all, the moments of release from physical pain. What other joy compares with that of the fading of pain into peace!

What greater gifts, then, has medical research bestowed than those of its conquest of pain! What, shall we say, has proved a greater blessing, more often, and to more people than the progress of aspirin therapy!

DISPRIN
REOD. is recommended for all those conditions in which aspirin would otherwise be taken.

From all chemists

It might seem at first of small account that, in Disprin, aspirin has been made soluble. But it is far from that. The solubility of Disprin means that this invaluable analgesic enters the body in true solution, ready to exert its soothing, pain-relieving effects without delay. It means, too, far less likelihood of paying for release from one pain in terms of another. The risks of heartburn, dyspepsia, or other gastric irritation, are greatly reduced. More than ever with Disprin, we can couple peace with deliverance, joy with thankfulness.



CHARIVARIA

SENATOR WYLIE, chairman of the Foreign Relations committee of the U.S. Senate, has announced that a hydrogen bomb dropped on Chicago would destroy Milwaukee. Civic authorities in Milwaukee have allayed local unease by pointing out that the reverse is, of course, true.



not be gained by this means, and that the Council may be obliged, as a last resort, to book a little time on the air.

All true-born Hertfordshire men must have experienced a thrill of pride at their county's victory at polo in the Cowdray Cup. It is thought that some suitable local honour may be offered the members of the winning team, Mr. J. L. Lucas, Colonel Prem Singh, Mr. C. de la Serna and Mr. F. S. Astaburuaga.

In the opinion of a medical writer, a man should have at least a couple of quiet days at home after his summer holidays before returning to work. That should give him a chance to dry his clothes.

There are conflicting reports from Rome and Belgrade about Trieste, but dispatches from Sir Victor Mallet at one Embassy and Sir Ivo Mallet at the other ought to hammer out the situation between them.

2 2

Lady Violet Bonham Carter, with three peers and Mr. Tom O'Brien, plans to form a National Television Council with the object of resisting the introduction of commercial television into this country, and publicity for the project has been sought through the correspondence columns of *The Times*. It is felt in some quarters that sufficiently wide support may

The present world total of 5,561,993 Boy Scouts being a record, it is all the more unfortunate that the supply of old ladies requiring to be helped across the road is rapidly diminishing. The really enterprising Scout can nevertheless still find plenty of scope for good deeds; and adjusting the carburettors of old ladies' miniature motorcycles is only one such way.

2 2

Dramatist in Funniest Play Quandary

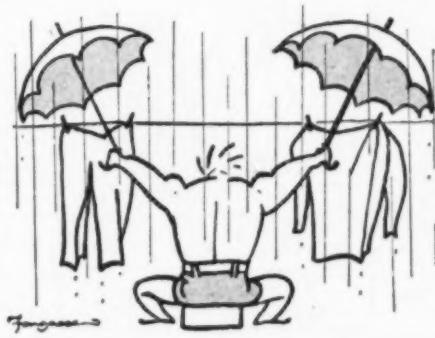
"I [Mr. T. S. Eliot] should call *The Cocktail Party* more comedy than *The Confidential Clerk*—it's a cheerful play. But that's my own view," he added quickly.

From a newspaper interview

"Ho [Mr. T. S. Eliot] thought the new play much more of a comedy than *The Cocktail Party*. Characteristically he added: 'But that's just my own view!'"

From a newspaper interview

2 2



We have read with interest in the journal of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations that a School of Nutrition and Catering is to be set up in India, with courses in nutrition, hygiene, human relationships, first aid, food preservation, correspondence, physiology, cookery, dietetics, architecture and economics. It seems hard on any nutrition and catering student joining to learn bookbinding.



LEADER-writing, like any other profession, has its secrets, its regrets, and its small triumphs. These last usually consist of some cutting from an obscure foreign newspaper in which one vaguely recognizes, bedded amidst incomprehensible words, a phrase laboriously and solitarily tapped out an evening or so before. There is a certain satisfaction to be derived from the thought that one's own poor efforts should thus be seen abroad as contributing towards the formulation of public opinion. It gives an extra zest next time an occasion arises to remark that "The people of this country will never, etc., etc.," or "Surely it is not beyond the wit of man, etc., etc.," or "It is devoutly to be hoped that the competent authorities will, etc., etc."

In leader-writing, as in love, there is no staying still. Take, for instance, the case of Germany, in the past as to-day a seemingly inexhaustible source of editorial pabulum. How many a leader-writer on how many different occasions has fixed a piece of paper into his typewriter and, under the heading "Whither Germany?" or "Germany—The Next Step," or "Germany and the West," bent to the sultry task of producing the requisite number of words by way of exposition. I myself first put pen to paper on the subject of Germany for the leader columns of the *Manchester Guardian* in the late twenties and early thirties. At that time the Germans were, in the eyes of the enlightened, the wronged innocents of Europe. Under the aegis of C. P. Scott we inveighed against French intransigence and militarism, which were obviously responsible, we indicated, for keeping Europe in so unstable a condition. If only, we suggested, the supine British Government would detach

PITY THE POOR LEADER-WRITER

itself from Paris, the peace-loving Germans and the forward-looking Russians would assuredly prove co-operative in etc., etc.

Such was the view of all good Leftists, the more poetic of whom were liable to don leather breeches and embroidered braces and go off into the blue with the *Wandervögel*. As for suggestions that the Germans were secretly arming, and otherwise preparing themselves for another war—these were clearly preposterous, and almost certainly invented and put about by armament manufacturers to ensure that the Disarmament Conference should fail. The Treaty of Rapallo, we insisted, was no more than the coming together of Germany and Russia for legitimate purposes of economic and cultural co-operation, and we indignantly pooh-poohed talk about its having secret military clauses. Fellow-practitioners, writing for less enlightened newspapers like the *Daily Mail* and *The Times*, on the other hand, had perforce to fill their allotted space with harsh and suspicious thoughts about the Germans, who, as every sensible person knew, asked nothing better than to smoke their large ornamental pipes at peace with their neighbours.

A few years hence these rôles were almost exactly reversed. By



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that time, the enlightened, without at all abating their pacifist zeal, were neither to hold nor to bind in their fervid denunciations of the Third Reich, while the others found themselves constrained to take up the theme of Germany's good intentions and legitimate grievances. The Nazi-Soviet Pact provided a kind of leader-writers' Paul Jones—one of those brief and all too rare, periods when the music stops and arms are indiscriminately grabbed. In the war which followed, leader-writing, like so many other activities, necessarily fell into the standard pattern imposed by acceptance of Germany as the Enemy.

When, with the ending of hostilities, leader-writers lifted up their heads again, it was in a decidedly more chastened mood than after the 1914-18 war. Western Values provided an emergency blanket to keep out the cold winds which blew in from the East, and the European Defence Community was a staff to comfort them. Neither the Good German with his pipe, nor the Bad German with his secret determination to have his revenge, emerged with any clarity; and currency restrictions, if nothing else, prevented the purchase of leather shorts and embroidered braces for *Wandervögel* purposes. Yet there was still Germany, soon once more economically rehabilitated, reaching towards unity, and organizing, it would appear, more or less reverently, pilgrimages to Berchtesgaden.

MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE

It's Been Lovely, Darling—Such a Bore!

"The odd thing about these international people—who with a lazy sophisticated charm are only too ready to damn anything—was that the de Cuevas party had been a great success."

Daily Express gossip column

"The Marquis de Cuevas' bizarre 'party of the century' [was held] in Biarritz on Tuesday. For those who attended, the evening provided, by all accounts, unrelieved tedium."

Daily Telegraph gossip column



"We must support you, you know," the White Queen whispered. "Thank you very much," Alice whispered in reply, "but I can do quite well without." "That wouldn't be at all the thing," the Red Queen said very decidedly.

Retreat from Utopia

BY CLAUD COCKBURN

THREE was a man on the Irish boat with dry-flies in his hat, and in a quiet, bitten-off, gentlemanly sort of way he was cursing politicians, and the taxation system, and the cost of living. He had a horse on board with him, too. All of which made him a fairly commonplace phenomenon of the Irish Sea.

What was odd about this man was that he was travelling from West to East. The situation he was opposed to was the Irish one. So doing, he constituted himself a potential straw in the wind—unless, of course, he was simply a swallow not making a summer.

The facts of this particular case were not susceptible of investigation. He seemed not to be the kind of man that would care to be asked whether he was more of a straw or a swallow. He did not have the decent British air of waiting about for a B.B.C. interviewer to drop in and chat understandingly.

Information from other sources, however, indicates that this man and his horse may be part of a small, junior-size, Social Trend. If we must be pompous we shall call it the

Retreat from Utopia. It is the reverse of what is known in Ireland as the Retreat from Moscow, or the New English Invasion.

The Retreat from Moscow started, naturally, when the outbreak of peace in 1945 produced simultaneously the Welfare State and unrestricted travel to a land envisaged as a bargain-basement heaven, conveniently located west of Socialism, east of the Dollar Area, and north of Really Abroad.

Members of the population group concerned were, and are—for the westerly trend still continues—distinguished by tenacity and spiritual tone from those who take (and how rightly) the view that Irish steaks and the price and strength of Irish whiskey are in themselves enough to justify a quick trip across.

The Retreaters have included people who want to settle down with foxes, people who want to settle down with salmon and trout, people who want to be near Tulyar, people who can't say we know much about farming—but what's wrong with getting a few acres and being self-supporting—in case anything terrible happens and with pigs it's just

a matter of using a little common-sense anyway, people who won't live in the same country with that man Bevan, and people who would live almost anywhere where the income tax isn't like it is in England.

It was among the members of the last category that unrest first manifested itself; it was true, they found, that taxation in Ireland isn't like it is in England, but it isn't at all like what some of them thought it was going to be. They began to huddle in corners of the Shelbourne Hotel, muttering about the Channel Islands.

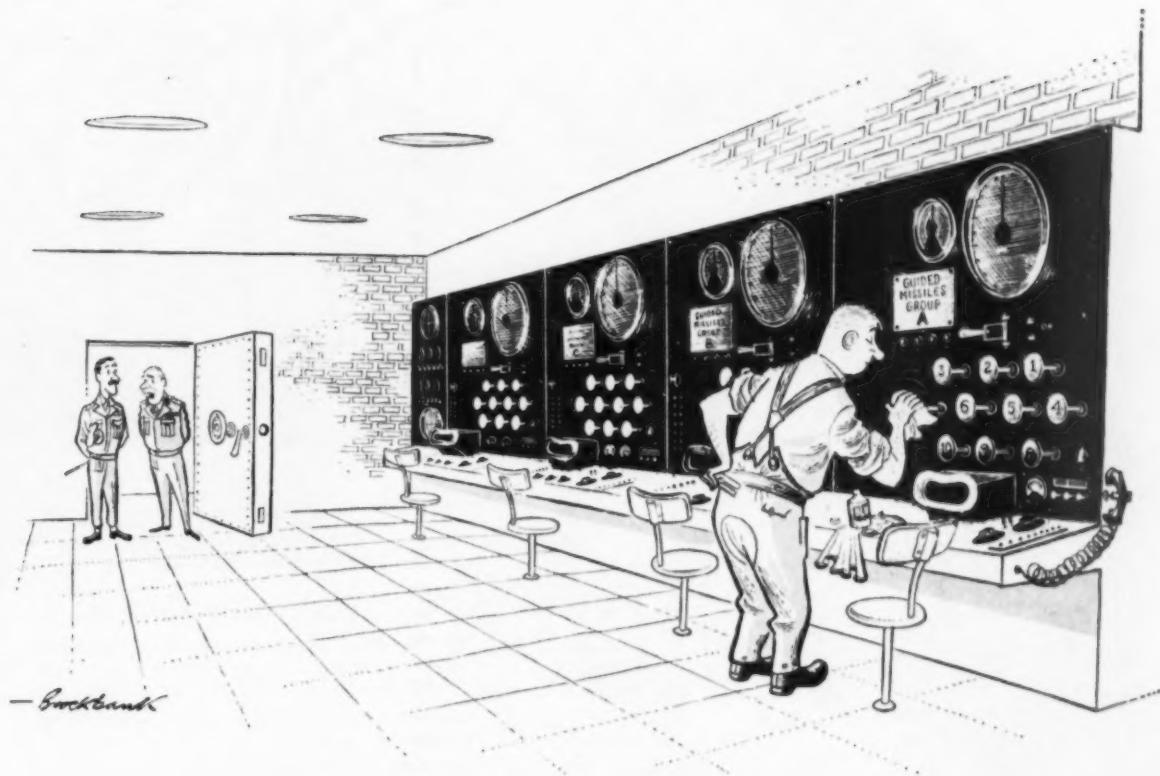
Indeed, most of the Retreaters or Invaders are normally equipped for the trek with a fair range of misinformation about Ireland. Their travel kit generally includes such handy gadgets as the shining Day Dream Generator, which can produce in a jiffy a ready-to-use conviction that there are still plenty of places in the west (or in Tipperary, or in Westmeath) where you can pick up a really fine old Georgian house with shooting and fishing for next to nothing, and then the repairs won't cost much because after all labour's dirt cheap over there, and there's none of this new-fangled nonsense about it. Besides, properly managed by someone practical, not feckless like the Irish, the place could actually be made to pay.

Latterly, it has begun to be noticed that a largish section of the dirt-cheap labour force is walking in the opposite direction, straight into the Welfare State, and often returning quite expensively new-fangled. Also the Irish have, from time to time, indulged in such extremes of fecklessness as actually raising the price of houses when the demand is heavy, and in the end passing a law which adds a 25 per cent tax payment to the cost of real property acquired by a non-Irish citizen.

This is a piece of legislation which compels cross-Channel buyers to a dreadful expenditure of time, energy and fees to Irish lawyers in the effort to evade it. Another reason for a notable slowing-up of the westward trend. With a



"Well, that was an interesting story. Have you ever thought of trying to sell it to one of the Sunday papers?"



"I knew there was a snag to this press-button warfare."

considerable number of those in front shouting—or at least doubtfully whispering—"Back," and those behind in London, looking over the estate agents' advertisements, saying "Forward," there are naturally underground movements at work striving to affect the situation in their own interests.

A real estate agent in County Clare is reported as doing good business raising the snob-value of local properties with the assurance that the Duke of Windsor has the house over the hill there as good as bought.

On the other hand, a prospective settler in West Cork is trying to put a kink in the inflationary spiral by spreading news, received from secret sources, that the peasantry are burning with resentment at the new English invasion, and that a major outbreak of *jacquerie* may be looked for any day now. ("Don't say I told you—as much as my life is worth—but they're drilling in the hills.")

Just how this is all going to work out—whether, in fact, the baby trend is going to grow up big and strong enough to put in a *Times* leader-page article—is a little difficult to say just at present.

It is certainly true that a number of the early settlers, hard-bitten by rising prices and less sure than they used to be of the imminent dogwards movement of English society, have returned to the shires, leaving, here and there, mementoes in the shape of terribly expensive roofs on terribly old houses, and that big tractor that was going to pay for itself over and over in a couple of years, easy.

On the other hand, there has been recently a sparkling little influx of very clever people from Hollywood earning enormous income-tax exemptions by just not being at home in California when the man calls. Their cries of pleasure mingle with the depressed hum of those English residents who wishful-thought that

this year's Irish Budget was going to make everything sensationaly nicer.

Most of them are unlikely to be driven to do anything much more drastic than having another talk with that man who said that if you turned the whole place over to producing hatching eggs for sale you couldn't go wrong.

There are some, however, who keep staring in a haunted kind of way at the map of Majorca, where, of course, you can get an enormous villa with good cheap wine and that wonderful fish-dish they have with rice and chicken for about four pound ten a year, and then labour there is dirt cheap, and marvellously old-fangled.



Economy Measure

"LACK OF
CEMENT
HOLDS UP
HOUSES"
The Star



Derequisitioned

NOTHING so rough happened to the house
For three hundred years as the typewritten hiss
"Until the cessation of hostilities."

It glowered at the soldiers, obstinate,
Intractable, a rearing stallion
Angry-red like December sun,
Defying puny riders to mount.
And they—as English themselves as the house—
Awe-stricken answered fear with abuse,

Mockery, laughter and iconoclasm.
No fountains graced their suburban homes
Where stony mushrooms and Disney gnomes

Inhabited green pocket-handkerchiefs;
So they turned the lions into mascots,
Prised them asunder and afterwards cast lots

For their new sites beside the Nissens.
Standing Orders blacked-out each room;
As the panelled galleries gathered gloom

The frightened fellows decided to brighten
The watching stones with a lick of paint,
Turning incomprehensible into quaint.

The house now shows a face of experience
To exiles returned;
Wrinkles and pock-marks, lines of endurance,
A park recovering through nature's tolerance.

Homing birds have forgotten fatalities,
Building their nests
In twisty haunts of the spiralling chimneys
With gone generations' feather formalities.

A homing family flies light-foot
Upstairs, downstairs, whistling, working,
Smoothing, soothing, gradually refurbishing,
While up and down England men are remembering
Suddenly, unexpectedly, by the four-ale bar,
Mowing the lawn, in the office canteen,
The far-off rolled-up years of the war
When they lived in a house that would have to be seen
To be believed, a house fit for the Queen.

ROSE MARIE HODGSON



EARL'S COURT DIARY

Where the Heart Is

BY MARJORIE RIDDELL

AM installed in new bed-sitting room at last hurrah. Previous tenant arrested day before I called. Mrs. P. says she always thought He Was Up To No Good and This Is Respectable House so I need Have No Fears. Haven't, as long as I can keep details from family.

Must say room and flat situation improving slightly. Even turned down three. Darned if I'll pay two guineas for converted cellar with hot water in winter only (beginning October to end April) and, quite distinctly, a cockroach.

Odd experience in Chelsea. Poor lighting in road and very dark. Approached house where room to let, could see vague shapes of people in area. Self, "Excuse me, is this number 14?" Reply, "Yes, who did you want?" Self, "Mrs. Fairly." Reply, "Ring lower bell three long, one short."

Rang. Door opened immediately, person must have been stationed just inside door. Self, "Mrs. Fairly?" Reply, very cautious, "Yes?" Self, "You're advertising bed-sitting room to let, and if it hasn't been taken I'd like—" Reply, "SSSH! Who were you talking to before you rang?" Self, "Just some people in basement area—" Reply, "What did you tell them?" Self, "Just said it is this number 14 and—" Reply, "Is that all?" Self, "Yes." Reply, "Are you sure?" Self, "Yes." Reply, sinister tone, "Come in then."



Self, very quick-witted, "Perhaps I'd better tell you first—I have two cats and a parrot." Reply, very quick, "No cats, children, dogs, parrots, men, bicycles!" SLAM!

So here I am in front attic in Earl's Court. Rent half-a-crown more than previous basement and worth it because of sun and no need for electric light at midday. Approach via narrow, vertical, semi-spiral staircase. Very slippery linoleum. One bruise. One broken saucer. Two days. But probably very good thing because not much

snooping from Mrs. P. on account of rheumatism.

Bathroom on floor below which is snag because no running water in room, hence broken saucer. Geyser, so constant hot water. Threepence bath, twopence hair, penny dishes, unless previous user not take full quota, worth exploiting if risk explosion. May be alarmist re explosion, but directions on geyser illegible except for DANGER in red. Experienced difficulty concerning taps until discovered can't use those in basin and bath at same time; also water running out of basin comes up in bath.

Notice over bath: "Do not put your milk bottles in this bath. You would not in your own home now would you? please." Signed: Mrs. Veronica Piercy (Landlady), Thank you." Notice over basin: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you and do not put your tea leaves down this basin. Signed: Mrs. Veronica Piercy (Landlady), Thank you."

Ah, well, home is where heart is and certainly better than frightful hostel run by ex-W.A.A.F. Admin. Officer (!) where Ursula at office lives. But must certainly ward off threatened visit by ghastly aunt.

Gruesome Repast

"MACMILLAN AND HEAD DINE AT CHEQUERS"

Daily Dispatch



Culture Without Rest

BY LORD KINROSS

THE people of Edinburgh, known to be refined, are also highly cultured—for three weeks in the year. Theirs, after all, was the classic judgment on Pavlova, dying like a swan in her prime: "She's awfully laike Mrs. Wisharrt." To-day, with only half a week of their Festival still to run, they are proving their cultural stamina in manful style.

On the last day of Rest without Culture, a Saturday, they played Highland games, in which brawny tribesmen coaxed recumbent telegraph poles upright and tried to hurl them away; languid athletes from the Lowlands, and even from England, reclined on the grass, playing with the electric toasters and canteens of cutlery which their prowess had won them; and an Argentine called, for art's sake, Romeo, ran a hundred yards, amid cheers, in record time.

The first day of Culture without Rest was ushered in by the yodelling of Olympic bull elks, leading droves of mates to pasture, under the auspices of Mr. Disney and as a prelude to a film in which Martin Luther "tells the Pope where he gets off." It continued with the chanting of male and female psalm-

singers, as droves of provosts, preceded by constables with silver coshes, processed up the aisle of St. Giles' Cathedral to inaugurate the Feast and incidentally pray for "all writers, dramatists and musicians."

Meanwhile, since even in festival Edinburgh the quest for Sunday luncheon is as arduous as Luther's quest for Truth, we had found Sabbatarian doors closed against us at the "*très distingué*" rendezvous with period decoration, at the favourite "haunt of visiting stage personalities," at the resort for "students and left-bank types who want to get away from 'plain' cooking but don't want to overspend." We had been haughtily rejected by a foreign head waiter at "no place for the hoi polloi"; but eventually, finding our proper place, had been charitably fed by a Scots one, who even allowed us a glass of light ale.

That night, amid scenes of municipal and musical splendour, the people of Edinburgh endured their first concert, observing how Gioconda de Vito, with an unruly forelock, worried away at her violin like a terrier worrying at a bone, and how Fernando Previtali, with flickering fingers, wheedled away at his orchestra like a fisherman tickling

trout. Next morning, at the Freemasons' Hall, they embarked on a diet of cultural elevenses, valiantly imbibing not coffee but Mozart, reinforced in their efforts by ranks of visitors in un-Scotch tweeds and outlandish foreign tartans, talking in strange Scandinavian, Teutonic and American tongues.

Meanwhile there was a relief from low living, if not from high thinking, at the Festival Club, which the municipal gardeners, skilled in growing the ungrowable, had banked with floral mops and brushes, crimson and orange. Here soft-voiced waitresses befriended the visitor ("In the lounge it's *afternoon tea*. If ye want just tea ye'll need to go through to the Lobster Bar"); and the people of Edinburgh contrived to be mistaken for foreigners. An obvious Parisienne, accosted by an Englishman in halting French, replied, with a momentary lapse from refinement, "I think the Festival's *smashin'*."

At their first first night the people of Edinburgh—though the play was an English one, *Hamlet*—felt at home in their own Assembly Hall, with portraits of elders of the kirk looking down on them in the entr'acte with comforting sternness, and the stage set right in their midst. With ghosts they were entirely familiar; as connoisseurs of funerals they especially enjoyed Ophelia's; the boy Hamlet, seeking their friendly counsel as to whether it was nobler in the mind to suffer, might have been any young student of their own university, with a difficult home life and the need for a nice Scotch landlady to mother him; moreover they enjoyed and laughed aloud at the reflection that in England the men were as mad as he.

At their second first night, amid an "awfully distinguished gathering," they found no difficulty in understanding Mr. Eliot, and speculated cheerfully as to who, in the plot, would turn out to be the parents of which. Afterwards a crowd of some hundreds, which included Lord Beveridge, gathered around the door



of the theatre, to see first a procession of harassed critics, hurrying to the telephone, and eventually a beflagged Rolls Royce, carrying off the Lord Provost and his ladies.

"Who was that?" they inquired.

"It was Mr. Eliot."

"It was no'. It was the Princess Royal."

On other nights there was a play, combining culture with thrift, in which a single Scotswoman, Lennox Milne, played all the parts, talking ten different kinds of Scotch and three of English. There was the American ballet, which the music-hall regulars took in their stride, finding it not so unlike *Annie Get Your Gun*, but a shade bewildered by the language of the synopses: "a man of many tangoes slides into the scene, firing the imagination of the ladies from Santa Barbara, who swell and rise in their foolishness and strangle their chance, while he basks in his muscles and manzanilla and old snipes." And after the show there was a late revue at the Palladium, with irreverent jokes about chamber music, and Arthur's seat, and Stradivarius ways of getting rid of a mother-in-law; and a young man who crooned that he had Lost His Heart to the Heart of Midlothian.

Besides drama there was opera: an Italian *Cinderella*, in which the ugly sisters were nevertheless "quite naicely dressed"; and the progress of a rake, who lived and died in circumstances comfortingly unlike those of present day Edinburgh. All this was very foreign. But late at night, on the esplanade of a castle cleverly floodlit to look artificial, before an artificial general in a floodlit box, the people of Edinburgh showed, in a military tattoo, that the Scots can roll drama, music and ballet into one, in costumes to shame all stage designers, and at no cost except to the taxpayer.

There was one skeleton only at this Feast of Culture: that of a male, filling an entire shop window near the Medical Faculty.

FLYING SWAN WINS HORSE SHOW EVENT
Portsmouth Evening News

Where was Pirie?



"Well, this isn't my idea of a moonlight flit."

Isn't Nature Wonderful?

The Japanese are planning to send camel caravans for trading purposes on various routes off the beaten track in Asia, Northern Africa, and Central America.

SOON the ingenious Japanese will stand
Upon the tinsel road to Samarkand,
In Timbuctoo, or else, with all his *yen*,
Voluble on a peak in Darien,

Merchant adventuring in pots and pans,
In shoddy gew-gaws, gramophones and fans,
Riding his camel and without demur
Calling Levantines "Honourable Sir."

Somehow the pair can hardly fail to please,
The patient beast, the patient Japanese;
Why does the Oriental's choice of freight
Seem so remarkably appropriate?

Did Nature know she'd one day need release
For her opinions on her masterpiece?
Was it for this she formed the camel's air,
The horrible eye, the lips' eternal sneer?

PETER DICKINSON

CHILDREN'S HOUR

Making a Sun-dial

BY A. P. H.

NOW, then. You have your chosen piece of land—stone pavement, crazy paving, grass? You have marked on it your circle, at the edge of which you are going to mark the hours, etc.—with paint, stones, sticks, holes in the lawn, or what you will. You have your Thing, *gnomon* or "style," the shadow of which is going to tell you the time. You have a hammer or mallet with which to drive it into the ground. You have the piece of cardboard or wood on which dear Daddy has marked the angle corresponding to your Latitude. Now you have to produce what planners call "an integrated whole."

The first thing you have to do is to mark on the edge of the circle the spot where the shadow falls when the sun is "over your meridian"—that is, it is due South—and it is 12 noon, by the Sun. You probably know where the South is, more or less. You may have a pocket-compass, but I shouldn't rely on that—it may be a long way out. You must borrow a watch, checked by TIM or the B.B.C.

But wait a bit. Before that you must find out at what time, by the watch, the Sun will be due South, and to do that you must ask poor Daddy (*a*) about your Longitude, and (*b*) about the Equation of Time.

Daddy, I fear, may be vague about both. If so, you must give him a book about sun-dials and a *Whitaker's* or *Reed's Nautical Almanac* for his birthday. Meanwhile, let me try to explain. All over the world, at noon by the Sun (Apparent Noon, the experts call it), men start thinking

about lunch; the merry sailors say "The sun is over the yard-arm" and prepare "pink gins." But it is not noon at the same time all over the world, and noon by the Sun is very seldom noon by the clock. Suppose you live at Whitstable, whose Longitude is 1 degree East. The Sun (or so we say) comes from the East: he travels through a degree (sixty miles at the Equator, but much less here) in four minutes; so he will be due South of your house at Whitstable four minutes before he is due South at Greenwich. Nettlebed, near Henley (where Mr. Peter Fleming lives) is one degree West: the Sun is over Mr. Fleming's meridian four minutes later than he is over mine and eight minutes later than he is over Whitstable. See?

Then there is another complication. You know, perhaps, that the Sun does not *really* "go round the Earth," as we say. The Earth goes round the Sun, and he takes only a year to complete the course, which is not bad going. But by a sad piece of mismanagement, he does not go round at a uniform speed in a nice round O: he goes round in an ellipse—which is, roughly, the shape of an egg. Sometimes, therefore, we (that is, the Earth) are nearer the Sun than other times: and when we are nearer, it seems, we go faster. Let us now go back and pretend, as usual, that it is the Sun that goes round the Earth. As he travels at different speeds, and arrives at Whitstable at different times, our ancestors decided that he was an unsatisfactory clock. Suppose, for example, that it was the law that the pubs opened at Whitstable at noon by the Sun. In February he reaches Whitstable fourteen minutes later than he does in the middle of June (which would madden the customers): in November he is sixteen minutes *earlier* (which would infuriate the Licensing Justices). So our ancestors cleverly devised a day of twenty-four equal hours which could be measured and recorded by mechanical things like clocks. They did this by striking an *average* of the Sun's queer doings in a year. "A clock," says the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (see DIAL), "is constructed to mark uniform time in such wise that the length of the clock day shall be the average of all the solar (sun) days in the year." So now, at last, chicks, you know what is meant by Greenwich Mean Time. It means Greenwich Average Time.

Four times a year—and only four—your sun-dial will agree exactly with the clock. The four days (on the meridian of Greenwich) are April 15, June 15, September 1 and December 24. The difference between Sun and Clock (called the Equation of Time) is never more than sixteen minutes, twenty-three seconds. On November 2-3-4 the Sun is that much ahead of the clock.

All this may discourage you, chicks. "What," you may say, "is the use of a sun-dial which only tells the right time four times a year?" Cheer up, it is not as bad as that. The Equation of Time changes very slowly—few seconds a day. Daddy, having studied his Almanac, will prepare a Table for you, allowing for Longitude and the Equation of Time, and showing how





much the Sun is behind or ahead of Big Ben every few days. If you keep an eye on this you will be able to use your dial with ease. I have a watch that loses badly, and I often check and correct it after a glance at my sun-dial. I also criticize the neighbours' clocks.

And when, chicks, you chirp "What use . . . ?" there are other answers. All this will give you (and Daddy) a clearer notion of what is going on around you every day, of the odd things your Earth and other heavenly bodies are doing. Before you talk so glibly of Space-travel and Tourist Rockets you should learn a little about the workings of this old-fashioned Universe: and constructing a simple sun-dial will teach you a lot.

Further, your sun-dial, all summer, will be a continual defiance of the most degrading folly of Mankind—the childish trick called Summer Time. Your dial will not always agree with Greenwich Mean Time: but it will be much nearer than Big Ben. But we won't go into that now.

 3 3

"During the twenty-six summer months of 1952, London housewives stockpiled only 1,500,000 tons of coal, 276,000 tons fewer than in the corresponding period of 1951."—*Evening News*

Didn't think winter was ever coming, perhaps.

FLOTSAM

I USED to strive against the tide
With trudgeon and with crawl:
But now I float upon my back
And never swim at all.

I used to scale the icy slopes
With alpenstock in hand:
But now I sit in Chamonix
And listen to the band.

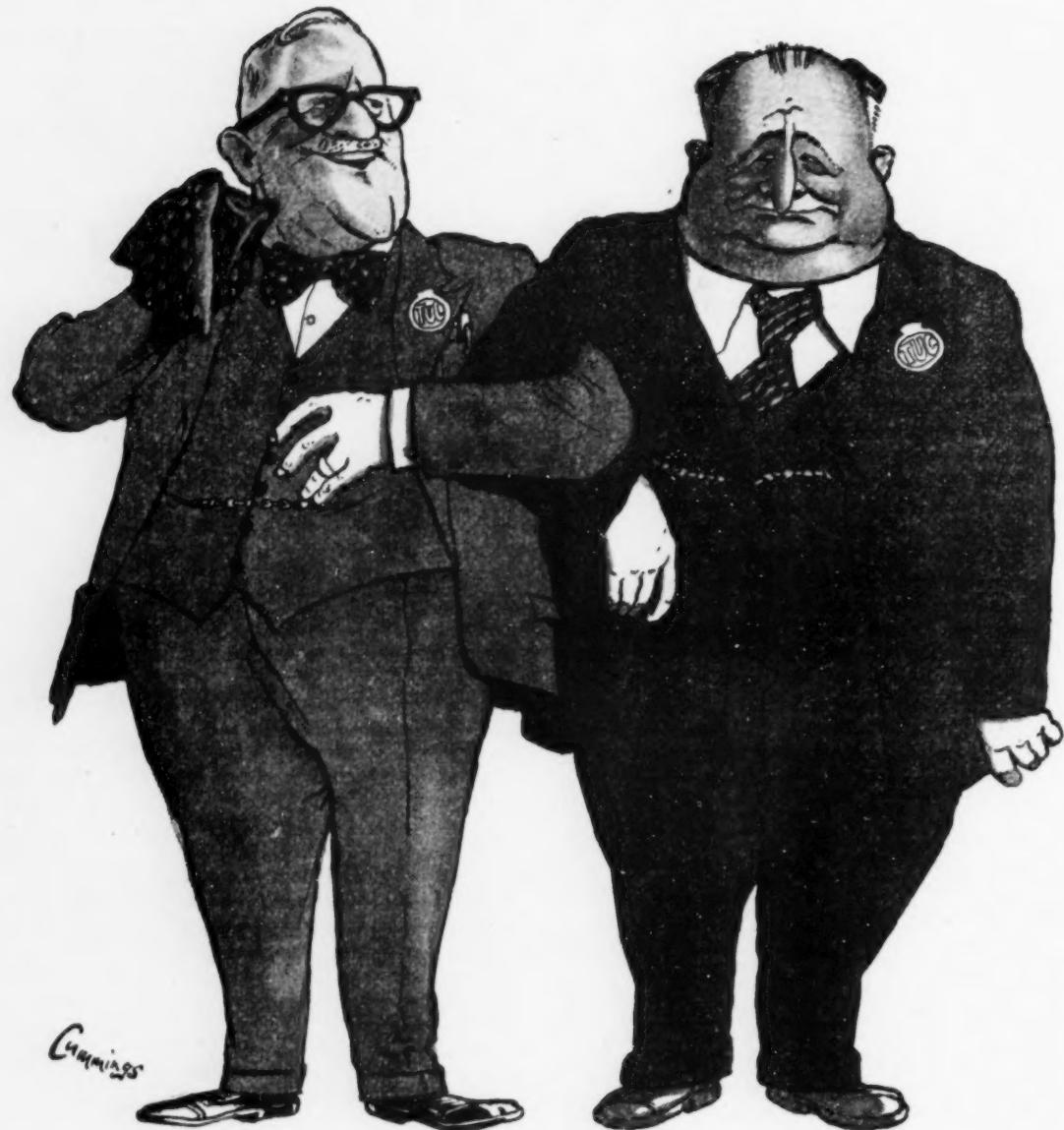
I used to ponder Life's design,
The How and eke the Why:
But now it doesn't bother me,
Because it passes by.

It passes by—it passes by,
As ebbs the tide away . . .
And did I start to float at Rhyl,
And is this Colwyn Bay?

G. D. R. DAVIES

UNION IS STRENGTH

(The Trades Union Congress is in session at Douglas, I.O.M.)



THESE be the Great Twin Brethren,
Renown'd in many a fray,
That miners and that transport men
Might get a rise in pay.
Ruthless they seemed and reckless,
And Tory blood ran cold
When Lawther or when Deakin spoke
In the brave days of old.

But Arthur and Sir William
Have both been born anew,
And wisdom, age and honours
Have changed their point of view.
For (as Macaulay noted)
In many a bold attack
It's those behind cry "Forward!"
And those before cry "Back!"

B. A. YOUNG

Humor Article

BY J. B. BOOTHROYD

MR. ALBERT KETÉLBÉY, emerging the other day from his monastery garden, was asked in a television interview, "Are you still composing?" and replied, according to my information, "I'm certainly not decomposing."

If this has established him as a new comic find I should be the last to grudge it. The fact that the joke was first cracked by the composer Samuel Sebastian Wesley (1810-1876)—unless the cathedral organist who passed it on to me thirty years ago was pulling my leg—should not in any way be held against Mr. Ketélbey. Few of us are blessed with a bent for original fun, and even for those it's a hard row to hoe; for the rest, it is considered sufficient to recognize that someone else's joke warrants repeating as one's own. Part of the human tragedy is the universal yearning to raise a laugh, fettered by nature's meagre distribution of the necessary equipment.

This brings me, in spirit, to No. 276 West 43rd Street, New York, headquarters of "Laughs Unlimited," and to a kind offer from proprietor Art Paul to supply me with "gags, scripts, cartoons, special material, comedy songs and humor articles."

The offer is more than kind, it is generous, because the accompanying literature, a broadsheet symposium of tributes from satisfied customers and admiring columnists, suggests that Mr. Paul is already heavily committed. An illustration shows him "reading a nifty to Sol Sherman, tie manufacturer, who wants a joke for a convention speech"; he is much in demand by doctors "who want amusing anecdotes to soothe their patients," or women who are "called upon to speak before groups." He is constantly besieged by "dentists, plumbers, salesmen, lawyers, bartenders, elevator operators, bankers, executives, governors and senators." Only a humorist's shyness, no doubt, prevents even loftier claims; no reference is made to presidents; nor does the name of Governor Stevenson actually appear. But ex-Representative Fred A. Hartley once bought thirty dollars'-worth of political

rib-ticklers (including: "John L. Lewis with his eyebrows—they're so heavy, no wonder he can't see eye to eye with anybody"), and Rudy Vallee is said to have subscribed \$4 for the "Dr. Kinsey Monologue for Night Clubs." (An article of Mr. Paul's belief is that "sex, in any form, is the all-time yock-yielder.")

Mr. Vallee's purchase, I suppose, comes under the heading of "special material"—like that supplied to a lady client who wrote: "The General's wife insists I do 'something' for our cabaret party. Would you have a narrative poem, a little on the suggestive side—not dirty—maybe a dumb blonde type of monologue?" And the master, alive to a fine distinction, did not fail.

Mr. Paul deserves his success. Anyone who has seated himself before a blank sheet of paper under the pressing necessity of writing an original joke on it will see eye to eye with me on this. I must protest, however, at the way his publicity material constantly harps on the ease of the job. Asked by an interviewer: "Don't you ever use a gag file?" he replies, "Anybody with a true comedy mind can think up a gag quicker than it would take to look it up in a file." Or consider this, from a biographical passage:

"He'd always been witty. Gags just came to him. When a movie magazine ran a contest for a joke to incorporate in 'The Cohens and Kellys in Scotland,' Art submitted: 'He's so cheap he reads between the lines.' This netted him the first prize of \$50 and an undying conviction that it pays to coin yocks."

Now, it is deceitful to pretend that material of such calibre is thrown off just like that. In fairness to working humorists the world over, Mr. Paul should make at least a glancing reference to the midnight oil, heart tremors, moist palms, digestive dislocations and domestic acrimony which are a part of the humorist's lot; as it is, he makes us look like a lot of playboys showering brilliant effects with the ease of a Catherine-wheel.

Look at this:

"Just before leaving the office, Paul sat down at his typewriter and wrote upon a little white slip:

SCENE: A movie set with three

Hollywood-type of movie chairs. On the back of one is written, producer; on the back of the second is written, director; on the back of the third is written, relative!"

P.S.—That gag just sold to the *New Yorker* magazine."

Obviously, Paul had been working at this little masterpiece for years. The casual effect was nothing but a put-up job. When he pretends to come out spontaneously with, "Some guys like to hold their girls tight—I like to hold mine sober," anyone in the same line of business knows it for the flower of a year's intensive cultivation.

My point is this. Once it catches on in editorial circles that joke production is as easy as Mr. Paul makes out, a living wage for the working humorist will disappear into economic history. I therefore appeal to Mr. Paul to soft-pedal this angle in future. Until I receive some form of guarantee to this effect I must regretfully decline to become a customer of "Laughs Unlimited."

Doctors, dentists, plumbers, salesmen, lawyers, bartenders, elevator operators, bankers, executives, governors, senators, dumb blondes and Mr. Albert Ketélbey must, of course, do as they please. But I, for the moment, shall continue to coin my own yocks.

"Population of the United States increased more from immigrants than from deaths in the first 10 years of this century."

The Daily Times Herald, Dallas
Anything can happen there.





IT begins in the horse-butcher's, where nobody ventures except on his dog's account.
So I open with "Find me a high bit, I'm off fishing."
"My uncles," remarks the butcher, a dainty man—"my uncles go fishing."
"Do you go with them?"
"Me? Not likely."
And he recedes through the doorway into that tiled chamber from which automatically one averts the eye.

* * * * *

Really it began long before, with our friends who took a Frenchman walking. It was a fine day and the scenery pleasant, but no Frenchman just walks in the country, and soon this one was plucking edible snails from a hillside. After lunch they came to a valley with a little stream. "Crayfish!" he exclaimed, flung himself full-length, slid his arm into the water, and brought up two of them.

That set it off. He showed them how to construct nets, how to weight and bait them, how to catch your crayfish and cook him. Several expeditions had been made, and this year we had been admitted to the secret.

Not that the local people would look at crayfish, or the owner of the right bank, a retired military man; but should any restaurant keeper or Soho provisioner

get to hear, that would be the end of our crayfish. Already, you see, ours.

* * * * *
"Where'd you say you were going?" asks the butcher, with his head in the safe.

"Oh," I reply, "it's just outside"—and pull myself up. Men who would arrive after dark and fling in, if you please, a horse's head (so the Frenchman had averred), all nested with twigs, and next day haul it out with every crayfish adhering. The uncles!

"—Miles away," I conclude; "that's the bother."
"Just wondered," says he, hacking.

* * * * *
It's a fortnight since we made our first foray. Dull weather. The crayfish is nocturnal. But some fishermen favour a come-and-go sunlight, and one relates how, on a hot afternoon, having stretched himself on the bank to read, he heard a strange scratching noise and looked up to see them ascending out of the water in hundreds, in thousands . . .

The valley seemed to encourage secrecy—this or the next? Our road narrowed and then with the twists and descents of a well-kept lane we were in the village; a couple of score old houses, two pubs, a church, and the stream. This, winding, we followed down, past boys with jam jars and nets, girls on stiles, to the semi-privacy of the fields. Stumpy willows; cattle bridge, and no cattle; behind us the village roofs, ahead ploughed



acres. For a half-mile or so it was all ours—and the crayfish's.

* * * * *
"How's that?" asks the butcher, returning.
Horrible!—just the thing!

* * * * *
We had settled on a convenient bend where there was a bedding of water-thyme and the current ran deep, and lowered our nets—noisomely baited—at six-foot intervals. Ten minutes to wait.

But it was such a little, such an ordinary stream, and not a crayfish in sight.

Grass-heads swayed. A faint squealing as of pigs came from a mechanical rake on the hill. The wooded ridges hedged us in from who knows what tentacles of suburb, what roaring roads.

A train nosed up the valley. "Nice train," said one. "In seventy years," said another, "someone will be saying 'nice jet.'" "Perhaps he'll be crayfishing." "Let's pull up." It wasn't time, but we rushed, each to a net, and lifted . . .

* * * * *
"Crayfish," says the butcher, sniffing, "can't say I fancy 'em myself."

* * * * *
Two came up with the first net, five with the second, several more with the third and fourth. Soon we were snatching them out—mud-coloured, clinging, clawing,

hissing things—in half-dozens and dozens, to be crammed into a straw shopping bag strung along the top with a gap. Some fell, backing quickly into hummocks; others waved wicked pincers, or rattled that tail-piece grandly known as "the telson." Within the hour, bag full, we were in one of the pubs discussing with the landlord everything except crayfish.

We took away a big bottle of cider. Having caught your crayfish, you keep him twenty-four hours (so that he'll clear), and then cook and eat him: a sequence of mingled alarms and delights.

In the night I woke to hear a stirring and crackling as of newly lit twigs. The crayfish, still sewn up tight, in the bath.

Then the next evening, dreading what was to happen, with the crayfish suddenly let loose in the bath like giant ants discovered, and a dixie bubbling with cider and water, onion, herbs . . . I won't go on. It wasn't quite as bad as we'd feared, and with the first mouthfuls we forgave one another.

* * * * *
My conversation with the butcher has now reached double tracks.

"That ought to make them bite," I agree, recoiling; but then advancing, "*How's the fillet?*"

"I'll wrap it up well. *Very nice and tender.*"

"Good. *Don't wrap them up together.*"

"*Two and ninepence do you?*"

"All right. *Which is which? Thank you, good day.*"

"Good fishing."

* * * * *
That steak was the best I'd tasted in months, and we had a bumper catch.

One thing, don't let your crayfish catch you. He may stray, disconcertingly, in railway trains or, worse, in your own house. Once let him peep at you round the coal-scuttle or from a cushion, and you're lost. I know a poor fellow who, starting as we did, now has a crayfish in a tank on his window-sill. He feeds it with garden worms; he watches over its moults, and receives its sometimes painful caresses.

G. W. STONIER



Sexual (and Other) Inaction in the Human Male

BY LIONEL HALE

MY own monumental life-work—
the Hale

Report on the Human Male—
Is the ripe fruit of ruddy
Great weary years of study.

We researchers have found

Fresh ground

In devoting our attention

To what in the matter of sex and
other things men do *not* do, or
men seldom do, or men do
hardly worth a mention,

Using the combined analytical
methods of Dr. Kinsey and
Bishop Colenso.

Sunday papers, please copy *in
extenso*.

% % %

In the matter of sex, now, men
(Up to seventy-three per cent over
the age of ten)

Appear to find an absorbing
attraction

In simple Inaction.

% % %

And whether you put it down to
untutored mental haziness
Or just to laziness,

The fact remains that thirty-two-and-a-half per cent have never
kissed a lady's patella,

And sixty-six per cent still go to bed
swathed in hygienic Soporella,
And quite a number are so sexually
childish

That they never go wild, or even
wildish,

Over such well-known fetishes as
porpoises,

Old boots, bicycle bells, or coroner's
corporuses.

(The figure here varies from
point-nought-eight per cent
in stockbrokers

To ninety-nine-point-nine recurring
in Portsmouth stokers:

That's where they largely lack
it—

In the lower income bracket.)
And twenty-eight per cent of
males after marriage

Have never winked at a lady
when alone with her in a
railway carriage;

But *per contra* fifty per cent of
these twenty-eight per cent
have roared
With panic, and pulled the communica-
tion cord.

% % %

It must also be confessed
That the results of our "Free
Association" test
Came to us as a shock.

Thus, confronted with a stick of
seaside rock,
Eighty-nine per cent of males over
twenty-one shed only a dim
light on

This interesting and evocative
subject by promptly replying
"Brighton."

In Wales, the point was even more
sadly missed with

The ninety per cent who answered
"Darro me! Aberystwyth!"

% % %

As for Ireland, we nearly abandoned
that,

After sixteen hours with a Dubliner
(cunningly code-named Pat)
Who sat all day in a snug
With a glass in his hand and his head
on his lug,

And when we pointed out the sheer
inactivity of being nothing, not
even plain hetero,

Said "For the sake of a quiet life,
me boyo, what could be
better-o?"

% % %

We investigators find little or no
satisfaction

In such evidences of sexual inaction.

Moreover, apart from sex, our
statistical facts

Reveal that the male commits in-
numerable Un-Acts.

Thus, forty-two per cent of the less
sensitive (or bolder)

Husbands of Pimlico do not even
under pressure go to *Tristan und
Isolde*,

And the lack of interest aroused by
folk-dancing in the Conservative
Club of Dolgelly

Is proportionately deathly.

And forty-one per cent in Torbay
would not recognize the "Mona
Lisa" or "The Gleaners,"

And seventy-six per cent of South
Shields miners never take their
trousers to the cleaners,

And in short the percentage
Of all men (over the Dissent-Age)
Who are not in a state of inaction—

In such matters as mending bath-
taps, or paying the radio licence,
or taking out decent insurances
for the sake of Wife and Babes,
and brushing up their French,
and keeping abreast of Mr.
Graham Greene's new hem-line
for the Roman Catholic Church,
and visiting the Natural History
Museum, and remembering birth-
days, and putting cigarette-ends
in the right-place-not-the-bath,
and loving Mr. R. A. Butler
for himself, and meeting distant
relatives at Liverpool Street, and
standing up to head-waiters,
and in general avoiding a
personal premature appearance
of petrifaction—

Our researches prove
That in life as in love
The percentage of even moderately
active males to be infinitesimal,
Or at any rate down to our last
dear, darling, dirty decimal.

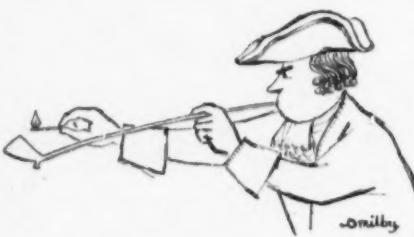
% % %

These statistical facts of Inaction
in Man

Were always the same since the
creature began,

And apply to the high and the
low and the middle:

With a toora-too-lay and a fol-de-
rol riddle.





Thank goodness the raucous teeming pleasure ground in Battersea Park will soon yield place—



—to the quiet blissful groves we knew of yore.

Boswell on The Grand Tour



MONSIEUR ROUSSEAU MAKES A PUN

TUESDAY 4 DECEMBER. After taking a walk in the *rallon*, I went to the door of Monsieur Rousseau. Mademoiselle Le Vasseur was abroad, and I could not get in. I met her on the street, and she said, "Monsieur Rousseau will let you know this afternoon at what hour he can see you." I dined at the table d'hôte with a Monsieur Durey, a Parisian, son to a rich financier, but obliged to fly on account of *lettres de cachet* which were taken out against him by his sister's influence, who is married to a man in power, and wants to have all the fortune of her father. This same Durey is, however, a sad dog. He has spent a vast deal of money upon women, and upon absurd plans for the Young Pretender. He is a kind of author, writes you a criticism in the *Journal Encyclopédique*, and even composes you a system of education on a plan entirely new. This last has not yet seen the light. Small will be the light which it will impart—"Not light, but rather darkness visible." Monsieur Durey lives snug at Môtiers and eats in the inn, when some good friend does not invite him.

My other companion was Monsieur de Turo, who

has an estate in the neighbourhood, has travelled a good deal, has a good deal of knowledge, and is a tall, stout young fellow. But with the whim of an English oddity, he lives constantly in this inn. The inhabitants of the village have named him their Governor, an office of small authority but of consequence enough to make Monsieur de Turo hold his head extremely high. I have seen him grant a pass to a beggar with great dignity. He generally keeps a parcel of dogs, and goes a-hunting on the hills. Scandal says that he is intimately connected with my youngest landlady. Perhaps I have done him an injury in the spelling of his name. Perhaps he writes it Thurot, and possibly may be a near relation of the gallant Captain Thurot who during the last war awed and dismayed the coasts of Caledonia. After dinner I waited on Monsieur Martinet, the Châtelain, a knowing, hearty fellow. He engaged me to sup with him.

At five I went to Monsieur Rousseau, whom I found more gay than he had been yesterday. We joked on Mademoiselle Le Vasseur for keeping him under lock and key. She, to defend herself, said he had another door to get out at. Said he, "Ah, Mademoiselle, you can keep nothing to yourself."



He gave me the character of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, "a man who did good, simply because he chose to do good; a man without enthusiasm. One might say that he was passionately reasonable. He would come to a discussion armed with notes, and he used to say, 'I shall be sneered at for this,' 'I shall get a hissing for that.' It was all one to him. He carried his principles into the merest trifles. For example, he used to wear his watch suspended from a button on his coat, because that was more convenient. As he was precluded from marriage, he kept mistresses, and made no secret of it. He had a number of sons. He would allow them to adopt none but the most strictly useful professions; for example, he would not allow any son of his to be a wig-maker. 'For,' said he, 'so long as Nature continues to supply us with hair, the profession of wig-making must always be full of uncertainty.' He was completely indifferent to the opinion of men, saying that they were merely overgrown children. After paying a long visit to a certain lady, he said to her, 'Madam, I perceive I am wearisome to you, but that is a matter of no moment to me. You amuse me.' One of Louis XIV's creatures had him turned out of the Academy for a speech he had made there. Yet he perpetually visited this man. 'For,' said he, 'he acted in his own interests, and I bear him no grudge for that. He amuses me. He has no grounds for being offended with me. I have grounds for offence against him, but I am not offended.' In short, he continued to call on this Academician, until the latter put a stop to it because he found it disagreeable to see a man whom he had injured. He had plenty of good sense, but a faulty style: long-winded and diffuse, yet always proving his point. He was a favourite with women; he would go his own way independently, and he won respect. If you become a Member of Parliament, you must resemble the Abbé de Saint-Pierre. You must stick to your principles." BOSWELL. "But, then, one must be very well instructed." ROUSSEAU. "Ah, sure enough. You must have a well-furnished head." BOSWELL. "But, sir, a Member of Parliament who behaves as a strictly honest man is regarded as a crazy fool." ROUSSEAU. "Well then, you must be a crazy fool of a Member; and believe me, such a man will be respected—that is, if he holds consistently by his principles. A man who changes round on every occasion is another affair."

He talked of his *Plan for Perpetual Peace*, taken from the Abbé de Saint-Pierre. I frankly owned that I had not read it. "No!" said he—then took one down from his bookcase and gave it me. I asked him smilingly if he would not put his name upon it. He laughed heartily at me. I talked to him of the German album and how I had been forced to take one; but that except what was written by the person who gave it me, there was nothing in it. Said he, "Then your album is *album*." There was a sally for you. A precious pearl; a pun made by Rousseau. He said, "I have seen the Scottish Highlanders in France. I love the Scots; not because my Lord Marischal is one of them but because he praises them. You are irksome to me. It's my nature. I cannot help it." BOSWELL. "Do not stand on ceremony with me." ROUSSEAU. "Go away."



Mademoiselle always accompanies me to the door. She said, "I have been twenty-two years with Monsieur Rousseau; I would not give up my place to be Queen of France. I try to profit by the good advice he gives me. If he should die, I shall have to go into a convent." She is a very good girl, and deserves to be esteemed for her constancy to a man so valuable. His simplicity is beautiful. He consulted Mademoiselle and her mother on the merits of his *Héloïse* and his *Emile*.

I supped with the Châtelain. He said, "We two are alone, so as to be free to talk of my Lord Marischal and nothing else." We were hearty.

* * *

"Chaos reigned at Le Havre, where five transatlantic ships—the United States, *Le de France*, *Normandie*, *Groote-beer*, and *Presidente Peron*—all arrived yesterday. The shipping lines concerned arranged for bus and lorry convoys to take them to Paris."—*Manchester Guardian*

That moved the chaos where it didn't show so much.

Through a Rose-tinted Keyhole

BY WILLIAM THORNTON

THE literary crisis in Eastern Europe and beyond, referred to in these pages three months ago, entered upon a new phase last week with the publication in East Berlin of a revised list of terms of abuse officially approved for describing the activities of Western Nations. This replaces the one hundred and seventy-eight terms of abuse banned during May, "pending revised directives for the correct treatment of political questions."

From a rapid survey, conducted under considerable difficulties, it appears that reaction throughout the peace-loving areas under Soviet influence has been disappointingly mixed. Veteran political-columnist Sergei Polovsk, in a statement to his wife over the breakfast-table, is alleged to have said: "I am too old a dog to learn new lists of terms of abuse. I shall continue with my series of articles on Poultry Feeding from Household Scraps." Arrested later, Polovsk admitted that prior to the distribution of American food parcels there had not been any household scraps. He confessed that he had always been a carrion vulture and misleader of public opinion.

Erich Biebstrau, whose epic poem, *Working - Towards - a - New - Blueprint - for - Social - Regeneration*

Hand-in-Hand-with-Our-Enlightened-Soviet-Neighbours, has lain untouched in a chest of drawers for the past three months, was even less restrained. "This is a very disappointing list," he stated, "and no help to me at all. Canto IX of my poem will now have to be scrapped in its entirety; the substitution of *Chewing-gum Spies* and *Monkey-killers* for *Imperialist Bloodsuckers* and *De-humanized Western Bandits* not only wrecks the imagery of the canto but would also place an intolerable strain on the scansion of the choruses." In a further statement, made as he was being hauled away to the cells, Biebstrau observed that there should have been some literary men on the committee. "Three months," he shouted wildly, "to amend *Boogie-woogie gangsters* into *Boogie-doogie tramps*—whatever they may be!"

Further east the response was a little more encouraging. The Headmaster of the Omsk Secondary Modern School welcomed the new list. "We have had a difficult term," he said, "but with the publication of the new list discipline can be tightened again. The senior boys have been assigned the task of learning it by heart, and several of the junior boys are already writing out "I must try not to be a carrion-eating servile imitator" five hundred times. We think this is an excellent list and have already started amending our history text-books."

Considerable enthusiasm is likewise reported in artistic circles centring round the Pripet Marshes. Work has begun on the choreography of a new ballet provisionally entitled *Arsenic Mixers and Paralytic Sycophants of the Atlantic Seaboard*, and a comic opera featuring *parasitic traditionalists, leprous heroes, playboy soldiers, and conceited dandies*, is planned for the winter. According to the Secretary of the Pripet Marshes Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts the list has proved "most stimulating."

Still further east, in Verkhoyansk, where the banning of the terms of abuse during May revealed

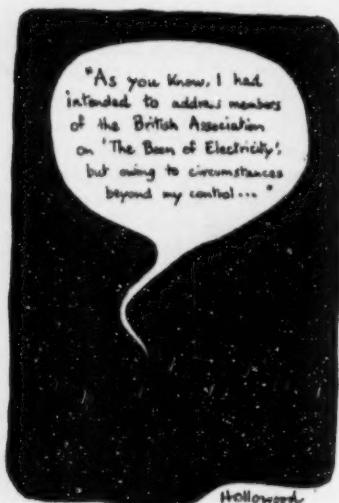
serious gaps in the indoctrination of numbers of collective moss-gatherers, steps are to be taken to eradicate the well-meaning but archaic forms of speech which have lingered amongst the aged and illiterate members of the community. An official of the Verkhoyansk Adult Education Committee has stated: "Our problem is rather a different one: it is not so much a matter of restraining the men from using the previous list as persuading the older students to stop talking about *Czarist money-grubbers, Grinders of the Faces of the Poor, Enemies of the Classless Society*. Only the very exceptional moss-gatherer has anything approaching a really international outlook." The substantial truth of this view of the matter was borne out by the repeated interjections of the moss-gatherers' spokesman: "When do we get this mechanical moss-gatherer Lenin was promising?"

All those, however, are merely isolated incidents. In the western regions of the Soviet territories the new list has been accepted with satisfaction, if not with acclamation. Agitprop reports a resumed demand by orators who have been speechless since May, the clicking of typewriters floats once more upon the evening air; and the great presses in the city newspaper buildings are clanking into action. Above all, the Man in the Street—that tremendous personage of whom all governments are but the humble servants—is pleased to find the contents of his evening paper returning to something like normal. "Course I enjoyed the nature articles," as one of them put it, "but you couldn't be expected to go on reading them. I reckon the Press is only catching up with public opinion with this new series on the Degenerate Rabble and Effete Betrayers of Humanity!"



"BAKERS TREAD WARILY OVER WHITE BREAD"
Manchester Evening News

Didn't know which side it was buttered, perhaps.





"Vous savez bien, mon cher ami, que la robe à 300,000 est impossible.
Avec tous ces impôts nous sommes ruinés. Je prendrais alors les deux à 250,000."

Slimming by Gravity

BY NESTA PAIN

THE deliberations of the Royal Society of Medicine do not receive nearly enough publicity. Who, for instance (apart from a handful of Fellows who probably do not need the information anyway) knows anything about the dramatic revelation recently made by an eminent professor on the subject of weight and gravity?

The idea occurred to him when musing on the fact that birds begin to mate in the spring. It is only when the light falling on their heads and necks reaches a certain intensity, he reflected, that their fancy turns to love. So why, he wondered, should not weight be similarly controlled by gravity? (To the lay mind, the connection may seem a trifle obscure, but that is scarcely the professor's fault.)

He decided to test his idea. First of all, he wanted to confirm a suspicion he had long nursed that while some people are fat, others are thin. The layman might not feel that this simple truth stands in urgent need of confirmation, but to the

scientist nothing is a fact until it has an experiment behind it.

The professor called for volunteers, but their willingness to be martyrs to science was not severely tested by his first experiment. All they had to do was to lie in bed and eat as much as they possibly could of the gargantuan meals constantly laid before them. They ate two or three times as much as they normally would, and at the end of a week or so the professor was able to record with satisfaction that the naturally fat group had put on a vast amount of weight, while the naturally thin were as meagre as ever.

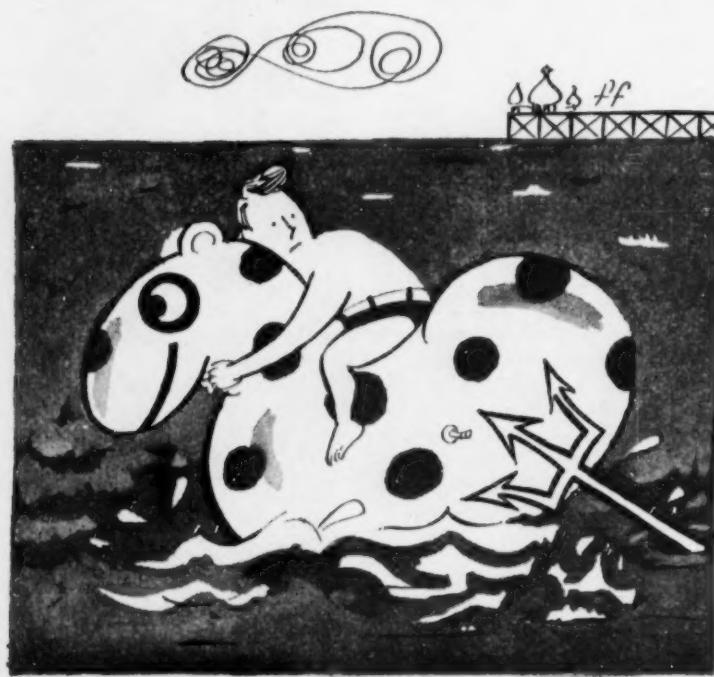
The next experiment was more trying, for he required his volunteers to wear coal-gas balloons strapped to their arms. This was not designed to take the weight off their feet but to lessen the pull of gravity and so—according to the professor's theory—make his subjects grow fatter. At the end of twenty-four hours they had indeed put on a pound or two, but here the experiment ran into difficulties. The volunteers, showing

none of that glad martyrdom that science expects, complained that the balloons interfered with their sleep by night; they even got hold of the idea that they made them conspicuous by day. In the end, none of them would consent to wear the balloons long enough for definite results to be established.

The professor turned to rats. Rats, he thought, would show none of this fractious disposition to fuss over trifles and would serve his purpose equally well. So he dressed his rats in chain-mail and put them to live under a magnet; but complications cropped up which he has omitted to specify in detail. Perhaps the rats, depressed by the weight of their unaccustomed armour, lost their appetites and grew thin instead of fat. Or perhaps the mathematics of working out the effect of the chain-mail in increasing gravitational pull, against the effect of the magnet in decreasing it, and balancing both against the extra energy demanded of the rats in supporting their corselets of metal, was too much for the professor. This is quite possible, for it was certainly mathematics which defeated him in his next experiment.

Abandoning rats, he decided to give human beings another chance. He called up his volunteers and loaded them this time with sandbags in order to see if the increase in the pull of gravity thus caused would make the volunteers lose weight. At the end of twenty-four hours the results again were encouraging, for all the volunteers had lost a pound or two; but here a horrid doubt crept in. Was it really gravity which was responsible? Exercise undoubtedly reduces weight (though not very effectively), and muscular effort is certainly called for in lugging about a load of sandbags. The professor, a notable mathematician by any standards, completely failed to disentangle all the factors involved and was obliged to conclude that the "experimental results defied analysis."

Now, however, he feels that the solution is in his hands. All that is





"I'm sorry to disappoint you, sir, but these seem to be only imitations."

needed, he thinks, is to shut some rats and mice in a specially designed centrifuge and accustom them to living their lives in revolutions. Then he will balance the centrifugal force against the gravitational pull, and all will be crystal clear. In the meantime, however, the centrifuge has not been designed and no animal has yet made this adventurous change in its style of living. And so the professor, while still holding to his theory, cannot declare it to be fact.

But need the public wait for the pernickety standards of proof which scientists demand? Already the theory has far more experimental evidence behind it than many of the remedies enthusiastically adopted by slimmers.

Here, then, is an opportunity for

the scientifically-minded to try out a brand new method of slimming. No more unpleasant dieting, no more pills and potions, no more uncomfortable exercises—all that is demanded is something a little unusual, perhaps, in the way of adornment. Gaily-decorated sandbags, strapped to cunningly-selected portions of the person, might well strike a new note in fashion. Bracelets, anklets and even tiaras of solid lead would add a touch of distinction to the *toilette*, while melting away those unwanted pounds.

The scraggy can benefit as well as the plump. Their plight has been even worse in the past, for medical knowledge has been able to offer them almost no help at all. Now, with a cluster of bright balloons

firmly strapped to their arms and walking—literally—on air, they can waft on their way upheld not merely by the balloons but by the assurance that they are effortlessly putting on flesh with every passing minute.

Yes—these learned men are far too shy. It is no less than their duty to allow the public to share in such treasures of knowledge.

3 3

"NOTE TO PAGE A 14 COMMONS. TUO QUOCUE LITERALLY MEANS 'AND YOU TOO!'. JULIUS CÆsar USED THE PHRASE 'TUO QUOCUE, BRUTUS' WHEN HE FOUND BRUTUS AMONG CONSPIRATORS AGAINST HIM."—From a News Agency Tape Machine Message

Shakespeare's error, then.



BOOKING OFFICE

Time - Lag

IN one of those rapid schematizations that are Sociology's main gift to Conversation, a friend once said to me that the time-lag was nil among highbrows, about ten years among middlebrows and a good half-century among lowbrows. You could probably work out a fairly convincing "ideas-drift" theory on these lines; but it does not work with books. Like the coelocanth, outmoded types of reader live on without evolving, their personal time-lag getting longer and longer. These middlebrows from the last century are horrifying to meet, and yet exciting because they preserve a contemporary vision of the past.

When I read critical essays about Galsworthy's re-emergence and a slump in Isherwood and the reaction of young poets against the influence of Dylan Thomas, I remember a Secondary School Sixth Form in 1934. I sat in the wings, learning how to teach, while an elderly man with the confidence in his audience of a minor prophet read bits aloud from *The Times Literary Supplement* and invited his pupils to sneer with him. One morning he read a short quotation with vividly mimed nausea and said, "This is a product of the pen of a female fiction-writer named, I am given to understand, Woolf." He told me that after a public lecture—he lectured a good deal—somebody had asked him to recommend a modern writer. "There is really no one since Dickens, is there?" he said to me. "Perhaps Priestley comes nearest; but there is certainly a marked diminution of power."

I found even more striking time-lags a few years later, when I was running a column of advice to poets in *Great Thoughts*, a periodical of high moral tone and no mean stablemate of *Sunday at Home*. Readers from all over the world sent in verses and I pointed out ways in which they

could improve their work. I was teaching in a private school at the time and the desire to pass on my sufferings may explain a certain harshness of tone in my comments. Previously the column had been run



anonymously by Mr. R. L. Mégroz, whose tone was kinder than mine; but then he had appeared in print before—I hadn't, my only qualifications for the post being the Editor's kindly recollections of our school days together and my willingness to review books free.

The strongest literary influence on these obscure but keen poets of the late thirties was Tom Moore. Lovers languished; honeysuckle smelled as ceaselessly as a tannery; moths were singed in flames. I found there were poetry clubs and versifying circles; but this literary underworld was not a source of folk-art or even of the kind of exuberant vulgarity that appeals to Miss Barbara Jones. It was genteel, etiolated, with the sad, pretentious incompetence of guest-house cookery. The atmosphere is rendered in these lines from Crouch End: *Ambition is the soul of my desire, Though not for worldly goods or selfish gain.*

I was always afraid that some hoaxer would send me in some well-established verse and, bemused by its company, I should not spot it but thunder away at the writer, advising him to read more modern poetry and keep an eye on those caesuras of his. I was also afraid, though more altruistically, of missing some Ettrick Shepherd or other *trowaille*. I knew from Professor I. A. Richards's *Practical Criticism* how difficult it is to recognize a good poem if nobody has told you that it is good.

Brusquely I chided my flock: "The unfailing gloom of your verse does not ring true and sometimes the lines do not scan." "Putting stress accents at intervals does not make prose into poetry. *Follows noon the* *morn and twilight likewise too* is not one of your best lines." Sometimes I asked awkward questions: "Why do you say the lark was singing like a nightingale?" "How can you wreath garlands of dew and flowers? If the dew is to be interwoven with the flowers the process is impossible, and if the flowers are to be interwoven with one another and the dew not shaken from them the garland will be damp and unpleasant to wear." Occasionally I gave some mild praise: "As far as one can judge a sonnet sequence by three sonnets you seem to be making a good attempt"; but then I fell to scolding again: "Why do you say that honey is sweeter than peas?"

One might have expected belated Georgians, schoolmistresses soaked in *Poems of To-day*, even Celtic twilight. It was the width of the gap that amazed me. Once a female friend sent me a parcel of poems by a Young Poetess who did not feel prepared to submit herself to the gaze of the multitude in person. This rare spirit sickened of the grossly material world and kept herself exalted by communing with the spirit of Shelley, that radiant, unearthbound spirit. Irritated by plodding through all this I rather rudely wrote back that Shelley had tried to run a steamboat service on the Adriatic and had the

interests, though not the abilities, of Lord Nuffield. The Female Friend wrote a justly offended reply saying that she hoped the Poetess would be able to pluck some advantage from my unconventionally expressed critique. I did not pay much attention. It was the week of Munich.

It is odd that whereas twenty years ago the educated young were rebels, to-day they seem to lack the spirit of experiment that inspired us. I have found them resistant to even so outstanding an ultra-modern as D. H. Lawrence, and it is extraordinary that so many of them should still be admirers of Rupert Brooke. I have myself, of course, been in the vanguard of literary appreciation for years . . . and years . . . and years.

R. G. G. PRICE

A Different Face. Olivia Manning. Heinemann, 10/6

Miss Olivia Manning is one of the best of our contemporary novelists. *A Different Face* is perhaps not quite so unusual and compelling as her earlier book, *School for Love*, but it is a remarkable, if somewhat depressing, novel. Hugo Fletcher returns from six years in Egypt (as a teacher under "the P.L.") to find the school in England in which he has invested his savings has failed before his arrival. He had chosen the job for its proximity to Coldmouth, seaside scene of his unhappy youth.

We are therefore shown Fletcher's life simultaneously at two distinct periods: his early days, and his experiences with the disreputable establishment in which he now finds himself involved. Miss Manning writes with feeling and real ability. Bombed Coldmouth, in the immediately post-war period, is admirably conveyed. Perhaps she piles on the horrors a bit too much. Fletcher's situation is interesting in itself, so that the reader almost regrets the serious vein necessitated by various violent tragedies—wishing to see the story worked out in a more humdrum manner. At moments the plot suggests almost the making of a play.

A. P.

Sound Barrier. Neville Duke and Edward Lanchberry. Cassell, 8/6

The reader in search of airborne excitement of the there-I-was-upside-down-at-nought-feet variety will not find it in this short study, by two distinguished pilots, of the problems of high-speed flight. It is an exposition, in language simple enough for the layman to understand, of the issues that face the designers and users of aircraft built to fly at high subsonic and supersonic speeds and high altitudes. It is given especial interest by the many references to the contemporary projects of designers in England

and abroad; and so up-to-date is this information that it includes a description of an experimental British fighter whose existence has not otherwise been revealed to the public.

With "sonic bangs" and new speed records so much—to take a convenient phrase—in the air, this book will be of great interest to those many amateurs of flying who almost, but not quite, understand the problems that attach to the raising of aircraft speeds beyond the velocity of sound. It is illustrated by numerous simple diagrams and well-chosen photographs.

B. A. Y.

The Oxford Book of English Talk. Edited by James Sutherland. Oxford University Press, 18/-

Mr. Sutherland has tried to compile a volume to record how people in England have talked since the fifteenth century, the turn and tone of their conversation. For this he has dug into verbatim court reports, racy-written reminiscences, *Hansard*, and talks on the B.B.C., as well as the "regular" authors one would expect to find, the people who tried to invent talk that sounded like the real thing. These last, with some of the scripted wireless talks, show most clearly Mr. Sutherland's difficulty; the *Dolly Dialogues*, for instance, and even the carefully exaggerated schoolmaster-talk of Kipling's Mr. King sound so much more like casual conversation than the verbatim reports do.

This will make a good book to put at one's guests' bedside, for the editor has tried to snare them into doing something more than merely re-reading their favourite authors by hiding all reference to writers and their books in a small unalphabetical appendix.

P. D.

Souls in Torment. Ronald Searle. Perpetua Ltd., 12/6

Mr. Searle's latest collection of drawings is well up to standard. It marks the end of St. Trinian's—a demise which will certainly and properly be mourned, but which has the compensation that it will serve to turn a unique talent into other directions. Some indication of whither is provided by *Souls in Torment*. There is a highly diverting literary section ("Pocket Editions fitted while you wait," "Mine's a Tristram Shandy," etc.), and another on finahee, or, more specifically, on how to get what Americans call a "raise." This section contains the delectable drawing reproduced on this page. There may, for all I know, be those who are less than enthusiastic about Ronald Searle's work, but to addicts like myself they are incomprehensible. Incidentally, his drawings lend themselves particularly well to book publication because of the vivid continuity provided by his bizarre, but still sharp, and pungent, if not macabre, attitude of mind.

M. M.

More Studies in Murder. Edmund Pearson. Arco, 12/6

To say that this book is chiefly remarkable for the disparity between the claims on its jacket and the material in its pages would be less than fair to the late author; all the same, for the blurb to speak of Mr. Pearson's "brilliant analyses," "intuitive methods" and "oblique insight into the minds and motives of the principal participants in these still-fascinating human-life-dramas" amounts almost to sharp practice—when the author, in fact, is often so short on analysis and intuition and insight that he abandons an unsolved mystery without offering

7. "I think I ought to tell you, sir, Brown's are trying to pump me about our next year's programme."



From Ronald Searle's *Souls in Torment*, reviewed on this page.

a personal theory of any kind whatsoever.

But perhaps the blurb's unkindest claim is that Mr. Pearson "approaches his subject in a serious and academic manner"; the book's charm, if the word is not too wry in the circumstances, lies in its light-hearted gusto. To describe how Domenico Cataido, having just had his throat cut from behind by a lady friend, sprang from his chair "thoroughly dismayed" must compel admiration from any connoisseur of language. J. B. B.

The Marshal Duke of Berwick. Sir Charles Petrie, Bt. *Eyre and Spottiswoode*, 25/-.

The son of King James the Second and Marlborough's sister has a strong claim to be accounted the most admirable of the Stuarts. He was a magnificent soldier, the peer of Villars and Eugène, if not of his own tremendous uncle. He was wise in political judgment, a realist without cynicism; to whom his half-brother might have listened with greater profit than to a Mar or an Ormonde. He was loyal, courageous and humane, and of absolute integrity.

Of this fine man Sir Charles Petrie is the obvious biographer. With his affection for the Stuarts and his sympathy with the Jacobites, his learning in matters military and all that relates to Spain, the scene of Berwick's most memorable exploits, he has almost a superabundance of qualifications. He has put them to use in a book which is as lively as well-found, always lucid and conspicuously fair. One may dispute an occasional finding; one may deplore some carelessness in proofreading; but one reads with unflagging interest and pleasure, and an encouragement engendered by the virtues of the subject.

F. B.

Too Late the Phalarope. Alan Paton. *Cape*, 10/-

"If you touch a black woman and you're discovered, nothing'll save you." Police Lieutenant Pieter van Vlaanderen gives this warning to a youth on an early page of Mr. Paton's novel. At the end of the book van Vlaanderen himself has disobeyed this law and, although popular as a man and idolized as a magnificent Rugby player, has been utterly destroyed. Only South Africans can know whether the case has been overstated, but there can be no doubt of Mr. Paton's skill in the stating. The story is told through the pen of an aunt who is herself half in love with young Pieter, and only occasionally submerges her feelings in a flood of near-Biblical rhetoric; the effect of this device is quite to eliminate the probabilities of tedium in the "propagandist novel." Mr. Paton's book may incidentally be propaganda for his own view of race relations, but

it is primarily an acute study of several characters in conflict. At least two of these characters, the tormented Pieter and his rigid old Boer father who reads no book but the Bible and regards the struggle against Hitler as an English war, are creations of quite uncommon power. J. S.

The Overloaded Ark. Gerald M. Durrell. *Faber*, 15/-

There is not a dull or irrelevant line in this account of an expedition to the British Cameroons by the author and a friend to collect specimens for English zoos—birds, reptiles and the smaller rarer mammals. The excitement of quest, chase and capture is vividly conveyed and, incidentally, the primitive but effective methods employed are made quite clear. Mr. Durrell has the happy gift of understanding and liking the natives, particularly his two hunters, Elias the imperturbable and Andraia the affected hypochondriac. Snatches of dialogue in Cameroon pidgin enliven the narrative—Elias is a natural comedian.

The collector, our author insists, is not the hero bravely facing danger (which he modestly minimizes) and then "leaving the rest to the blacks." His main business is grueling hard work as nurse, dietician and char-man, if his captives are to be kept in good health and heart. In the end a hundred or so cases, including many rare specimens, were brought safely to England. Miss Sabine Baur's line drawings call for special praise.

J. P. T.

AT THE PLAY

The Trojan Women
Philotus (EDINBURGH FESTIVAL)
Henry IV (ARTS)

UNDERGRADUATES have plenty to offer the theatre. They have taste and enterprise, and no ugly box-office shadows deter them from digging boldly in forgotten corners. At last year's Edinburgh Festival the Edinburgh University Dramatic Society improved our education with a production of KYD'S *The Spanish Tragedy*, acted with such intelligence and force that a ludicrously blood-bolstered evening became an experience for which we were all grateful.

This year the E.U.D.S. presents a double bill of EURIPIDES and an anonymous Scottish author of the sixteenth century. It would have been hard to provide a greater contrast, but the two plays are loosely bridged by a large frame at the side of the stage, containing when unlit what appears to be an X-ray for a specialist in ears, nose and throat. Lit, however, by some modern magic, it turns into a tragic mask resembling the "Keep Death off the Road" prophetess, while lit in yet another way it exhibits a rich study in Rabelaisian contentment.

The Trojan Women, in GILBERT MURRAY's beautiful translation, comes over well. Its almost mathematical piling up of absolute despair, which ends only with the departure for Greece of Hecuba and her attendants as ill-equipped for a long sail as any forlorn ladies can ever have been, is given dignity, clear speech, and a variety of grouping not easy on a small stage.

*The Trojan Women*

Hecuba—MISS SUSAN DICKINSON

*Philotus*

Philotus—MR. ALEXANDER GRANT

After this bleak, bone-dry apéritif the palate is ready for the rough humour of *Philotus*, a crude rustic farce about a dotard who makes a fool of himself in love and drags a whole village into a pitched battle with sheaves of grain. To a southern ear only a stray word is intelligible in its cataract of dialect verse, but the energetic mime leaves no doubt of the general trend of lines reluctantly blue-pencilled by the E.U.D.S. Nobody could claim much merit for the piece, but one isn't present every night at a four-hundred-year-old exhumation, and in that lies a modest thrill. Both these productions are by Mr. JACK RONDER, who has trimmed the script of *Philotus* and who must altogether have had a rather schizophrenic time of it.

A cast consisting mainly of undergraduates is also doing good work in London, at the Arts. Last spring, a few months before his death, we saw Italy's great actor, RUGGERO RUGGERI, take the name part in PIRANDELLO's *Henry IV*. Now it is doubly interesting to see the play, so soon afterwards, in English. Ably produced by Mr. PETER HALL, the company from the Cambridge Arts Theatre is sound enough to keep faith with a very difficult author. Even those on whom his hair-splitting in the matter of reality and illusion is somewhat lost must admit the admirable irony of his situation. I hesitate to use the fashionable phrase and say that the play is on two planes (which always suggests luggage sent untidily by air), but basically it is certainly dramatic. The misanthropist who pretends to believe he is a mediaeval Emperor in order to escape from a bitter world and fox his tormentors is at a tactical advantage which PIRANDELLO exploits brilliantly. Mr. TONY WHITE's *Henry* is a striking performance from a University actor, and Miss GILLIAN WEBB, Mr. RODERICK COOK and Mr. TONY CHURCH all add to a respectable sum. Incidentally, wasn't PIRANDELLO in very early, in 1922, on the revolt against psychiatry which is now flooding our comic stage with satires on Freudian omniscience?

Recommended

For something to make you argue, *The Living Room* (Wyndham's). For a neat comedy, *The Seven Year Itch* (Aldwych), and for a shrewd intimate revue, *Airs on a Shoestring* (Royal Court).

ERIC KEOWN

AT THE PICTURES

 Melba—*La Belle Image*

HOW plainly some of these musical biographies show or imply the weary strivings of a script-writer in search of some angle, some episode that will make an adequately dramatic

story. Admittedly, the music is the most important thing, or is believed to be: there is for some reason obscure to me an enormous public for a film consisting essentially of a string of self-contained musical items—so long as they are presented not as such but as elaborations or decorations of moments in some kind of extended narrative, about a real person.

(But has the experiment ever been tried of stringing together a lot of well-loved musical or other turns on the assumption that they were written or sung or originated by some entirely fictional personage? If not, why not? Free of the dead hand of a cautious legal department, they could make a far more entertaining story.)

Melba (Director: LEWIS MILESTONE), in spite of the honoured name of its director, I found undistinguished and often positively uninteresting. The excerpts from operas—*La Traviata*, *La Bohème*, *Rigoletto* and all the rest—are well done by experienced performers, and presented with as much visual variety as can be managed; but why, I repeat, do thousands of people want to see a string of excerpts from operas?

It's not as if their interest had been so passionately aroused in the leading soprano as to make them hang anxiously on her every note for fear she shouldn't reach it, or something of that kind. No; that sort of point is avoided—it would weaken the scene as a musical item, and musical items are sacred.

The script-writer has been able to find nothing really dramatic in the career of Melba. The bones of the film, or what bones it has, consist of the old love-e.-career situation: her Australian husband, angry at the general tendency to call him Mr. Melba, goes back to his farm, and she goes on singing with an aching heart.

PATRICE MUNSEL cannot make very much of the character, but in this picture there's nothing to be made of it. She sings beautifully, and that seems to be enough for the fans. To strengthen one of the linking episodes between opera and opera she is even made to sing, in a cab, a light ballad about the moon.

La Belle Image (Director: CLAUDE HEYMANN) is a film version of the novel by MARCEL AYMÉ that was published over here as *The Second Face*. It has much entertaining detail, but it's not one of the top-flight French films: the fantastic idea (the effect on a man's life of his sudden, inexplicable acquisition of a different and more handsome face) is not treated airy enough, and the efforts to be airy—for example, in off-screen commentary, which is used a great deal in the early part of the film—too often become rather forced and facetious.



Nellie Melba—PATRICE MUNSEL

[Melba]

There are other unsatisfactory things about the picture: its general effect is uneven, for at intervals we are disconcerted by being expected to take people's emotions seriously. But it is, on the whole, very entertaining. FRANCK VILLARD is good as the harassed but enterprising victim, and some small parts are most amusingly done.

* * * * *

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

There is a new Disney programme, the part of which worth seeing is not the full-length feature, *The Sword and the Rose*, but the half-hour documentary with it, *Water Birds*. Two more of the films that were here briefly during the French Film Festival in January are now back in London for a run: *La Minute de Vérité* and *Fanfan la Tulipe*. The attractive *Roman Holiday* (2/9/53) and *Adorable Creatures* (10/6/53) continue.

Releases are not a very striking lot. *The Story of Gilbert and Sullivan* (20/5/53) suffers from divided aims, but has good bits. *Dangerous Crossing* (12/8/53) is effective suspense, and *Powder River* (12/8/53) a good Western.

RICHARD MALLETT



AT THE GALLERY

Matthew Smith—The Artist Incognito

FEW living artists achieve the honour of a one-man exhibition at the Tate. To their number is now added Matthew Smith, a comprehensive review of whose production up to date can be seen there from September 3 to October 18.

Twenty-seven years ago the first Matthew Smith exhibition was held in the "advanced" gallery of Mr. Freddie Mayor, then of Sackville Street. Matthew Smith, who was at the time approaching his fiftieth year, had spent a long and arduous apprenticeship in London, Paris, Brittany, and even remote Cornwall, in teaching himself how to paint, without seeking or receiving much help from the outside world. The show was praised in an article by the late Roger Fry, the most distinguished critic of the day, and canvases were bought—either then or shortly afterwards—by both Epstein and Augustus John. Discerning collectors quickly followed their lead, and, from that time, his success and fame steadily grew; even more important, his great gifts, principally as a colourist, continued to develop.

His paintings are nothing like as difficult as the word "advanced," previously used with regard to the Mayor Gallery, might suggest; and among generations versed in Van Gogh and Rouault, with both of whom he has something in common, the number of his admirers seems likely to grow. While his drawing is summary and rather rough, barely indicating details, his colour is the real crux of the matter, both for himself and the spectator.

Matthew Smith transforms or embellishes the colours of natural objects with a variety of rich hues corresponding with deep currents in his temperament. The result is resounding; it is frequently loved, sometimes disliked or misunderstood, but cannot be

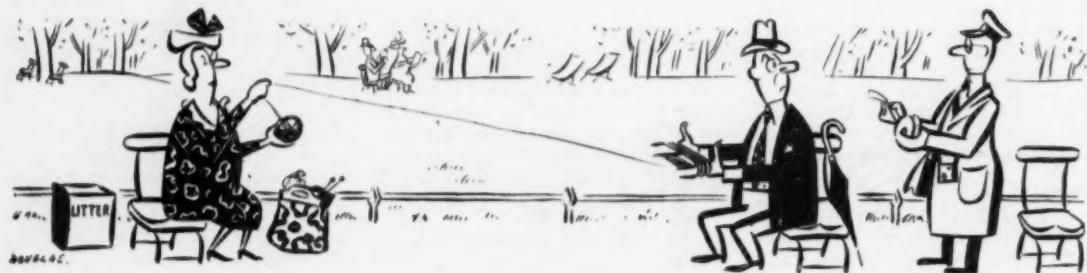


ignored. It is because of the reluctance of ladies to have their hair empruned on canvas, or their faces rendered by a patch of lemon yellow—acceptable, of course, should the sitter be Renoir's housemaid or Van Gogh's Arlésienne—that Matthew Smith has never been subjected to the lure of society portraiture. His living models

are frequently his friends, and are handled with the same truth to his aesthetic creed as are his flowers and landscapes. Paradoxically, it is told that on one occasion a charming girl, daughter of another celebrated painter, about to pose for Matthew Smith in the garden studio of a country house, appeared for that purpose without any make-up on, or with her, obviously thinking it unnecessary, in view of the type of work likely to appear; much to her surprise, she was politely asked to repair the omission. The story is a frivolous one, but it serves to indicate an unexpected angle in the composition of Matthew Smith as a man.

His character seems at first not to connect with his painting. Quietly and rather carefully dressed; solitary, and abstracted in manner, he would look more at home in the Athenaeum, perhaps a leading botanist or university don, than on the boulevards of Montparnasse or Aix-en-Provence where he has so often, as he says, "filled in time" after work. He is, in fact, an artist incognito; and his clothing and manner are an attempt, not always successful, to ward off the demands of the world on his over-responsive and emotional nature; his whole effort is to conserve all the energy he can for the production of "Matthew Smiths."

He has been known to use the home-made verb "to gay up," with regard to a picture. About his own work this would be an understatement; rather do his pictures decorate and enrich our meagre modern walls with some of the fierce joy and fervour which we ascribe to the mediaeval masters of stained glass in the cathedrals of Bourges, Chartres, and Canterbury. ADRIAN DAINTREY



"Both together, sir?"

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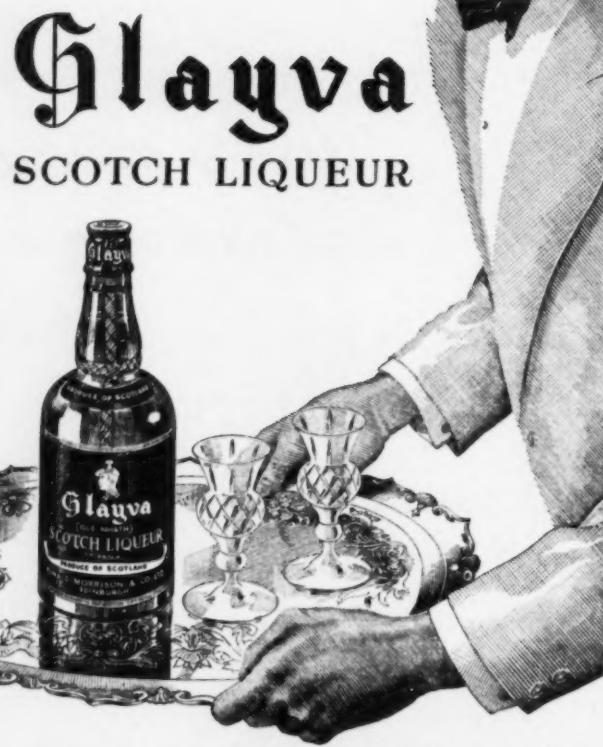


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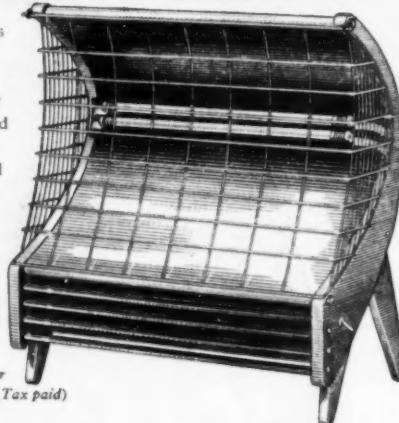
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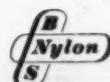
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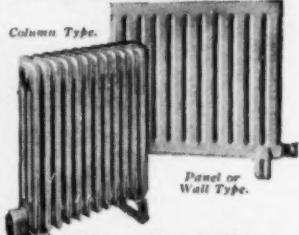
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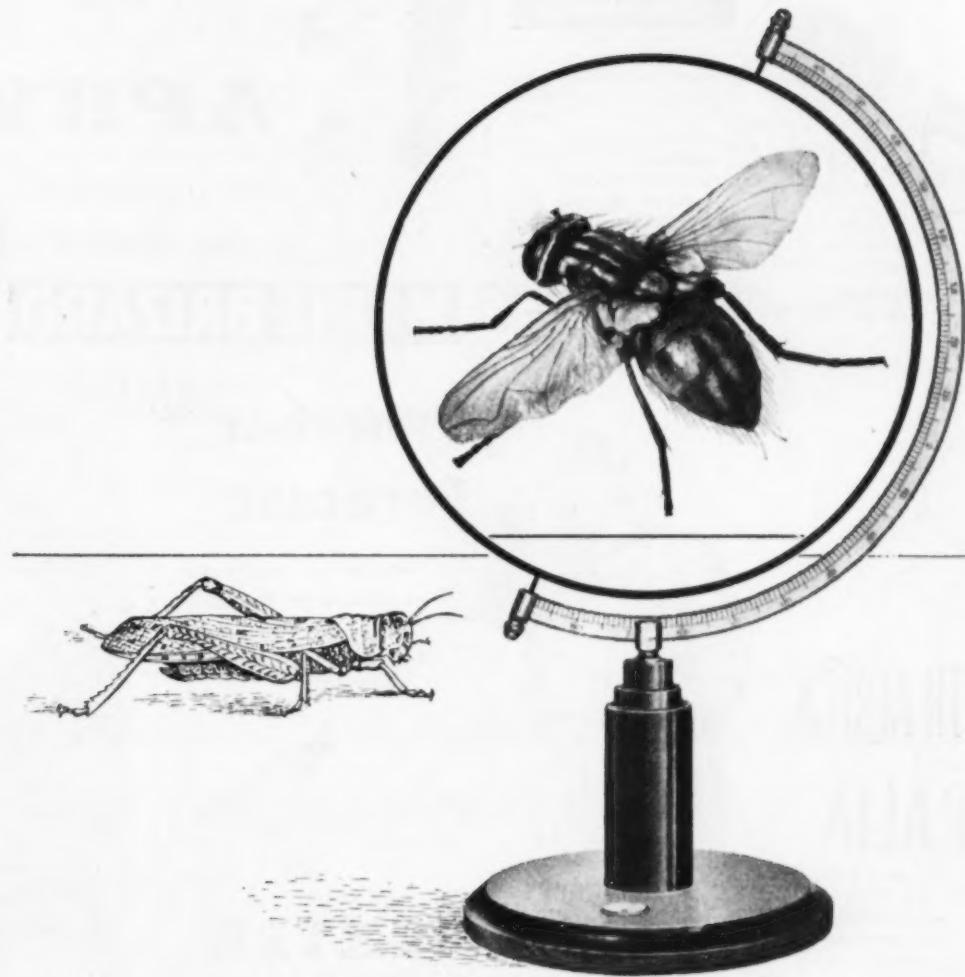


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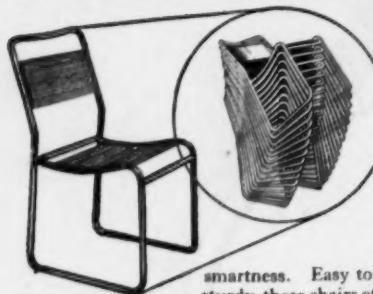
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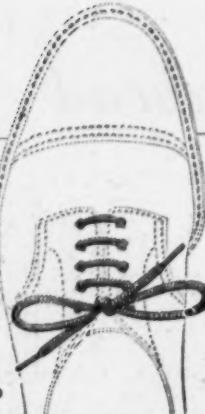


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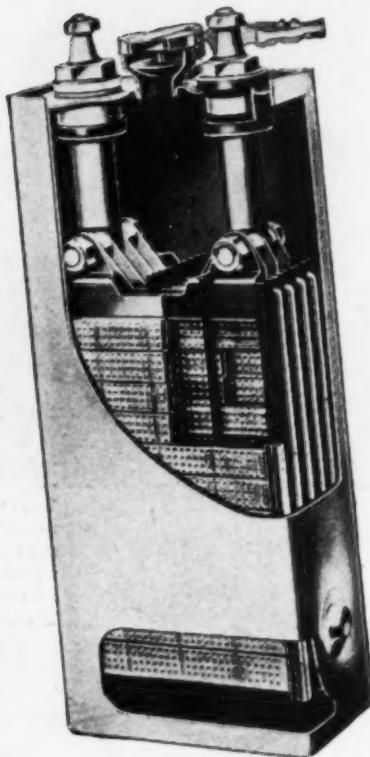
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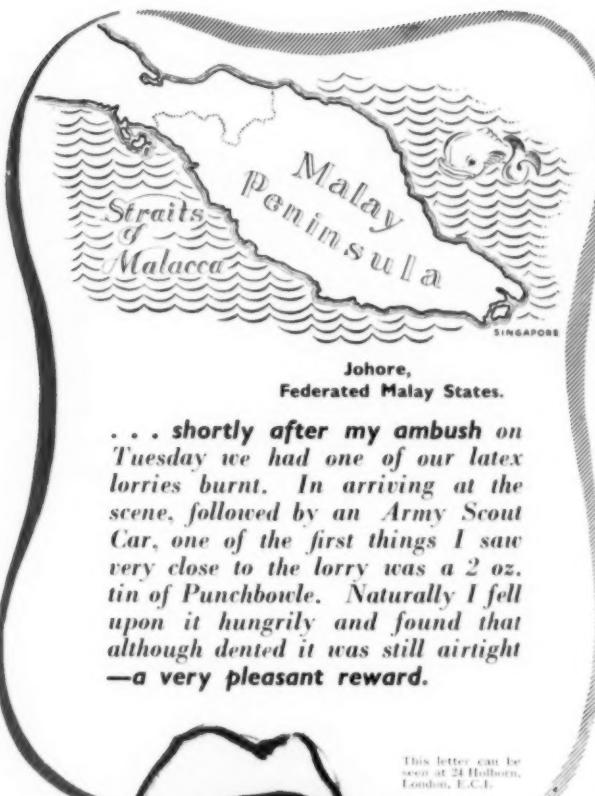
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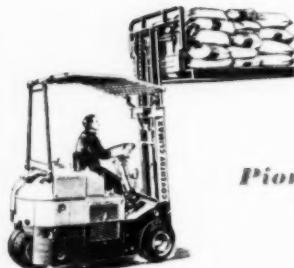




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